

ECHOES OF THE RED

J. J. GUNN



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J. H. Green

ECHOES OF THE RED

BY

J. J. GUNN

A REPRINT OF SOME OF THE
EARLY WRITINGS OF THE AUTHOR
DEPICTING PIONEER DAYS IN
THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENTS.

ILLUSTRATED BY
HERBERT JOSEPH



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Biographical Note

JOHN J. GUNN was born April 2, 1861, on the east side of the Red River where the Locks now are—about fifteen miles north of the Winnipeg city hall. He was the fourth child of a family of eight. His father was the late John Gunn, M.P.P., and his mother the late Emma Garriough Gunn, both persons of culture and education. The home influence, the constant association with people of refinement, and a good library always at his command influenced his whole life. His grandfather, the Honourable Donald Gunn, member of the first legislative council of Manitoba, corresponding secretary to the Smithsonian Institute, and writer of a History of Manitoba left upon his mind an indelible impression. He saw exemplified in his honourable grandfather what a man may become by self-improvement, so every spare minute was used for study. Though deprived of a college education, he became a well-educated man, conversant with the best English authors

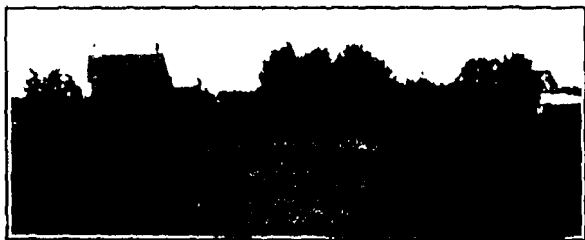
from the time of Chaucer. He mastered French too, so that he could read the works of French authors in the original.

He was a farmer and an apiarist with a minute and practical knowledge of insects, birds and flowers native to Manitoba. He was president of the Western Beekeepers' Association and filled local positions as postmaster and Justice of the Peace.

In 1905 he married Eleanor Flanagan, a public school teacher of Manitoba, and formerly of Bloomfield, Ont. One son was born to this union, May 11, 1907, but he died in infancy.

He was a man of pleasing personality and appearance, always courteous, with a fine sense of humour and an understanding heart. He was never too busy to extend the hand of friendship, nor the helping hand. His was a life of usefulness and integrity. He was trusted and loved by all who knew him and deeply mourned when in the fullness of health and vigour he met a tragic end—gored to death on his farm at East Selkirk, Sept. 22, 1907.

—*Eleanor F. Gunn.*



*The Author's Farm at
East Selkirk*

CONTENTS

I.	FOR LOVE AND COUNTRY	- - -	1
II.	THE VENGEANCE OF YELLOW WOLF		13
III.	THE TRIPMAN OF ASSINIBOIA	- - -	24
IV.	GASPARD THE VOYAGEUR	- - -	59
V.	LO, THE POOR INDIAN AND THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY	- - -	81
VI.	PEACE ON EARTH	- - -	87
VII.	THE FESTIVE SEASON IN THE OLDEN DAYS	- - - - -	104
VIII.	THE WOOING OF AN INDIAN MAID		112
IX.	AN OLD TIME SCHOOL : A REMI- NISCENCE	- - - - -	119
X.	A COURTSHIP IN MUDHOLE	- - -	122
XI.	TOMMACK	- - - - -	163
XII.	LOVE'S LABOUR LOST ON THE PRAIRIE		169
XIII.	ON THE TRAIL OF THE P'LICE	- - -	188
XIV.	WITH LO, THE POOR INDIAN IN 1896 AT TREATY PAYMENT AT ST. PETER'S, BROKENHEAD, AND FORT ALEXANDER	- - - - -	200
XV.	YARN OF THE PETIT JUROR	- - -	219
XVI.	AMONG THE WOOD CAMPS	- - -	240



OLD FORT GARRY

*The sun is set, and faint and far
The mellow church bells, wafting low
The call of peace to souls that war,
Make music in the after-glow.*

*Across the river's windings wide
The elusive echoes waft and float,
And faint and swell, and still subside,
Yet pledge a longed-for after-note.*

*And all the vibrant western sky
Is glorious now with golden haze,
A-glow to light for memory's eye
The hallowed scenes of olden days.*

J. J. Gunn



For Love and Country

SILENT and sullen the braves sat round while the old chief stood feebly in their midst and spoke. No sound nor sign of approval or dissent was made. Never before had words that counselled dishonour or betokened weakness or fear, been heard from those lips ; and the warriors, all unworthy though they were, could not but feel that the glory of their tribe was departing. Strongly conflicting emotions stirred in every breast, yet when the old chief resumed his seat and his pipe the silence was still unbroken.

Often and often had Standing Bear led his tribe to victory while yet the strength of manhood was his. Small though his following was, a mere fragment of the great Cree nation, the bulk of which had retreated westward to escape the marauding Sioux, he had over and over again struck terror into the hearts of those "Tigers of the Plains". With his own hand he had slain not a few of their bravest chiefs ; and in the forest lands of Minnesota, for thirty years and more, their scalps waved over his wigwam an unaccepted

challenge to his foes. During all those years the Sioux raided and burnt and slew in all directions, but always avoided the country of Standing Bear. This immunity from attack which his prowess gave him, invited fugitive bands to cast in their lot with his. Tribes beaten and scattered in war gathered under his standard, till the whole Red River Valley was peopled with those who owed allegiance to him.

But those many years of peace lived in a land of plenty were almost as disastrous as so many years of war and defeat might have proved. The scattered bands that from time to time joined his, were invariably fleeing from the victorious Sioux, and had no common bond of interest save the desire for peace. Then his own young men grew up without any experience in war, or any knowledge of the use of arms except that acquired in the chase. And so it came about that when the warriors that had grown to manhood with him, and fought under his standard on many a bloody field, had passed from the scene, none were fitted to fill their places. And now the great chief, Crow-wing, had made the very name of the Sioux such a terror wherever it was known, that no foe could be found bold enough to await his coming and for very necessity he was forced to seek new

laurels—or new scalps—in the land of the once invincible Standing Bear. There, too, his coming spread dismay, and the Crees and their allies fled before him as leaves before a gale.

From the borders of Red Lake, Crow-wing followed their trail, often finding the ashes of their camp-fires warm, but never seeing a foe. At length his camp was pitched on the Assiniboine's northern bank, and there he paused. The long pursuit into the very heart of the country of a foe who could not be overtaken, yet who had never been beaten in war, had an uncanny element in it. It looked as if Standing Bear was leading him thus far into his country the surer to destroy him whenever he might choose to give battle ; and so, watching his line of retreat, he paused and awaited with anything but confidence, the coming of events.

But no such plan had Standing Bear. Weak both in body and in mind, he was indeed no longer the ruler of his people. They venerated him for the benefits he had wrought for them, and for the fame he had achieved ; they magnified the great deeds of his earlier years almost into myths, but none had the courage to emulate them. They were fitted only for the "piping times of peace" ; and the old chief was borne along in the flight, and forced to speak and act as he was advised by those

nearest in authority to him. When the "Rapids" were reached—the great summer rendezvous of all the Indians under him—and it was found that the Sioux no longer followed them, a council was called; and here Standing Bear, speaking as he was advised, in a few brief moments blotted out the glorious score of his whole long life, by the proposal of one crowning act of cowardice. He spoke of the deeds of his youth, of the scalps he had taken, the battles he had won, and the peace and prosperity that had accrued to his people as the result of his rule. He expatiated on the extent and richness of the country which they possessed, and ended by proposing to send an envoy to the Sioux chief to ask him and his people to share the land with them in peace, and as a pledge of friendship he would give his only child—for his sons had all fallen in war—Crimson Bird, the daughter of his old age, to be the wife of Crow-wing. And so went out, in this cloud of shame, the light that had so long been the glory of the Crees.

No wonder there was gloomy silence after he had spoken. There were the leading men of a dozen broken bands, most of whom knew that their scalps were wanted by Crow-wing to wipe out old scores and make his ledger balance. They knew also of the proverbial perfidy of the Sioux,

how that even the most solemn treaty never stood in the way of their vengeance or their hate. But they had sought in the hour of extremity the protection of the great Cree chief, and this was how he proposed to protect them. What could they do? And the Crees, jealous and factious, and proud to offensiveness of the fame which belonged to a past generation, in which they had had no share and which they were not able to maintain, what, too, could they? It was a young man who at last arose to speak, Peguis, the Salteau foundling, whose father no man knew; the scorn of his tribe, which being the weakest in numbers and the last to seek refuge in Standing Bear's land of peace, was in its turn the scorn of all the other tribes—he it was who broke the silence.

He began by asking why none of the older men spoke. Then he reminded them of how Standing Bear had been wont to meet invaders while yet he had the strength of a warrior in him; with a few followers, he had, over and over again, repelled the Sioux; of the great fame he had won for himself and his people. He reminded them of their numbers, and the advantage the nature of the country gave them against the invaders; pointed out how the foe might be met and vanquished if they would but show themselves

worthy of their fathers ; and he drew a fervid picture of what Standing Bear would have done, had this situation presented itself while yet he was in possession of his faculties. He would not believe the words spoken by the old chief were his own , cowards had given him evil counsel ! And he appealed to the young men to save from disaster and disgrace the closing days of a life that had been so great, and to which they owed so much. He spoke with fiery eloquence, for above all other considerations, love for Crimson Bird was strong in his breast. He did not know if that love was returned, for a stranger, youthful and unknown, without rank or name, he dared not speak on the subject. But he could not see her given in dishonour to a foe while blood flowed in his veins.

"You are many and I am one," he concluded, "and the old chief will do what you say, but as for me, I have spoken. I am for war. . And if I am alone then I will go alone and seek Crow-wing in his camp. I will bring back his scalp or die, so that I may not live to see dishonour come to this great nation."

Then sprang to his feet a Cree brave, a man of quick tongue and craven heart ; one who had long aspired to be the successor of Standing Bear and

the husband of his daughter. In the former position he had come to consider himself secure, but with Crimson Bird not so secure. Her dislike of him was so great that she had exerted every faculty to baffle his designs on her. Of late he had come to look upon Peguis as the cause, so, partly from cowardice, but chiefly to be revenged on Crimson Bird and the man he believed she loved, he had suggested to the old chief the course he had proposed.

Who, he asked, was this who dared to raise his voice against the counsel of the great chief of the Crees? What was this boy? Was he a chief? or even a warrior? If the Saulteaux had a chief or even the son of a chief amongst them, let him speak. But let him talk to his young men and tell them that they are in the land of Standing Bear. They came, few and weak, and found a land of peace. This had been a land of peace for a great many years; and it was the wisdom of the Cree chief that had made it such. And now a boy mocks at the wise words of his old age; and a stranger, eating our meat, bids us disregard his wishes and bring war and ruin on ourselves. Thus he spoke, rousing the sympathies of the Crees and their older allies in favour of Standing

Bear's counsel, and against that of the hated Peigwace.

When he sat down others followed, in much the same strain, until the whole assembly seemed in favour of the old chief's proposal. Then Peguis arose again, and in a burst of passionate eloquence, begged them to be men, and to fight to the death rather than purchase peace with dishonour. But his words met only grunts of disapproval, and finding argument of no avail, he called on the young men of his own tribe to follow him and he would lead them against the Sioux. "Then," he said, "if they come to our friends over our dead bodies, let our friends ask their lives of Crow-wing, and purchase safety with their wives and daughters." But only one arose, an old man, who laid his hand on the young brave's shoulder and bade him be seated, and as he was in the Crees' country, to do as the Cree chief wished.

"Then," said Peguis, "I go alone, and I go to-night, to slay Crow-wing or to die in his camp." And as he spoke he turned to leave the lodge, but a score of braves surrounded him, and he was a prisoner till the will of the tribes should be carried out.

The dawn of the next day saw Crimson Bird borne away by her rejected suitor and an escort

of Crees to be given with other presents to purchase the friendship of the Sioux ; while all that day and the following night Peguis remained guarded in the council-lodge.

But the dawn of the second morning brought consternation to the Cree camp ; for the black horse of the Sioux chief, gaunt and splashed and with bridle still on, was seen feeding beside the river. How did he come there ? Was the Sioux as ever false ? From all sides hurried armed braves to the council-lodge, there to await the coming of Standing Bear. But no man came from the chief's tent, only a woman came, Crimson Bird. She passed in silence through the wondering throng, till she came where Peguis sat bowed in his disgrace. Then she drew from beneath her robe the band of eagle feathers that had been the war-cap of her father, then addressing the assembled braves said ;

"You wait for the old chief, my father, believing that the Sioux are at hand ; you wait for him to lead you who but yesterday gave his daughter for the friendship of his foe. Would you not rather a woman led you than a warrior who hides behind a woman ? I do not blame my father, for his mind is weak with years. But you braves, all but one, gave your sister to be the

Sioux chief's slave that he might let you live. Only one said no. And now the foe is at hand and the old chief, my father, can lead you no more, for he is dead. Here is his war-cap. Shall I wear it, and lead you? or shall one of you who sold me to buy your lives? No, it is not for women or cowards to wear the war-cap of so famed a chief. It is for one who could stand up like a warrior and counsel war while yet there was no dishonour on our name; for one who wished to die before dishonour came to it; the only one among you 'all worthy to be a son to Standing Bear, and to him I give it. Obey and follow him." and she placed the cap on the head of Peguis.

"But think not that Crow-wing leads the Sioux to-day. He, too, is dead. When you gave me to buy your safety, you did not ask me what I thought. But I was content to risk my life, but only that. I hid my father's knife in my dress.

"The messengers left me in the Chief's tent and when he entered in the darkness, my right hand clutched his throat, and no sound escaped him as my knife pierced his heart. I remained quite still till the night was half spent and all was silence; then I stole forth where his steed was feeding. I unfastened and led him from the camp.

When far enough to be quite safe, I rode like the wind, and reached my father's tent while yet you slept. And there I sat and thought, 'To-morrow the foe will be upon us, and there is but one in all the camp that has the heart of a warrior and whose words are wise, but he will never be obeyed while my father lives. For the braves think much of the old chief's words. I have slain the strength and terror of the Sioux, but there still remains the weakness of my own people.' What could I do?—But the Great Spirit had already been in your midst, and had taken the old chief to be young and bold again in the Happy Hunting Grounds.

"But there is no time for words, the sun is up and our foe may be near. Go you and meet him. I and the women will mourn for the old chief and bury him."

She returned to her father's tent. And Peguis, thus invested with the royal insignia, called on the abashed and conscience-stricken warriors to follow him against the foe, and prove themselves worthy of their sisters and their wives; and they obeyed him as their chief. But not a Sioux could be found in the Cree country, for they had fled. About the banks of the Assiniboine where their

camp had been, the willow bushes were hung with the mangled limbs of Standing Bear's messengers.

When Peguis returned from a long and fruitless pursuit of the Sioux, it was to take to his lodge the woman who had saved her country from a fierce and bloody foe, and who had made him ruler over it.

The Vengeance of Yellow Wolf

THE day was drawing to its close, supper had been disposed of, and we lay about the camp bearing silent tribute to the enchanting influence of never-silent pines, and the long rhythm, half felt, half heard, of the calm lake, when one drew attention to where the lights of the sinking sun fell on a group of white tents across the bay. A fair scene they made in that glorious light, from our dreamy point of view and with all the charm of distance added; but we knew that in them dwelt most unromantic representatives of a degenerate and perishing race; which race forthwith became the subject of a conversation languid and desultory in the extreme.

We discussed the different traits and phases of Indian character as we had become acquainted with them in literature. The bad and the good, the prosy and poetic sides of the red man, were all touched upon in various ways, till gradually interest drew around and centred on the "Medicine Man" and those occult and devilish powers

said to be possessed by that mysterious phenomenon. Many and curious were the bits of information brought out by this subject, no two being alike except in this single respect, that they were all second hand. We were each able to contribute something, heard or read, bearing on the subject, yet scoffing incredulity was the one sentiment generally expressed. All agreed, in short, to set the whole thing down to the ignorance and superstition of those on whom the Medicine Man practised—all but the trader.

He, whose long life had accumulated more experience of Indian life perhaps, than has ever been written, he alone had taken no part in the discussion, but lay back, the while, against a mossy mound smoking a short pipe and gazing through its curling wreaths, dreamily out over the lake into the fairy land of memory. Suddenly some one asked his opinion, and at once the demand was general for a story, a personal experience, anything bearing on the subject. All was animation in an instant, and as if to put refusal out of court, fuel was heaped on the fire, for the dusk was deepening now, and each composed himself to listen. The trader stroked his grizzled beard and looked quizzically from one expectant face to another, as if seeking a way of escape, but finally

THE VENGEANCE OF YELLOW WOLF 15

accepted the too-apparently inevitable with such grace as he could and began his story which, although the opening paragraph was somewhat disappointing, ran without interruption to the end.

In the course of my long life amongst the Cree and other Indians, I have, of course, seen many exhibitions of conjuring and devilry of which I might tell, but when driven into a corner, as I find myself now, I invariably fall back on one of my father's; the story of an event which happened before I was born and of which he was an eyewitness. I do this because, while not less believable than any one of my own experiences, and while I would vouch for the truth of the one as readily as for that of the other, I cannot get rid of the desire to leave some way of escape from such consequences as may follow the telling of a thing that—well perhaps ought not to be told.

I know the scene of this story like a book; a low-lying wooded point shaped like a narrow horseshoe on which a steep opposing bank looks down across the deep, though narrow stream that flows between. In the early days this river was an avenue of Indian trade; and directly across it from the point may still be traced the lines of two long-vanished "forts". One of these my father built, and from its walls he witnessed what

I am going to relate. Across the point, at the heel of the shoe, where the land has reached the level of the surrounding prairie, runs a trail, still used by the Indians, and known as the High Portage. So steep and high are the banks there that it is difficult to get even a birch canoe over, yet from the time of which I am going to tell, it is safe to say no Indian has ever rounded that point. All go by the Portage, and the forts thus thrown off the line of march were deserted, and disappeared.



At the apex of the point stood the lodges of Old Man's tribe. Nearest of all to the stream was the medicine tent of Yellow Wolf, the most famous conjurer of all the West.

In this position, when the leaves were falling, Old Man and his tribe had sought shelter from the wrath of Crazy Dog and his people, their hereditary and of late victorious foes. All winter the enemy hovered near, and all winter Old Man kept his retreat. And now the snow was leaving the prairie and a visit from Crazy Dog was daily expected. Not necessarily a warlike visit, however, for traders anxious for peace among the tribes had taken upon themselves the role of diplomats with the result that Crazy Dog was expected to

THE VENGEANCE OF YELLOW WOLF 17

become the son-in-law of Old Man, and share his hunting grounds in peace.

But while from one fort these good offices were being performed, from the other, unfortunately, adverse influences emanated. In it as master dwelt a man who but a few months before had come to the country from behind a London counter, and who, in his ignorance of the Indian nature, selfishly flattered every whim and vanity of Old Man. He possessed a fine physique and an endless fund of self-importance; and to supplement these had brought out a gorgeous uniform, a borrowed military title and a cavalry sword. All these he made do yeoman's service in the struggle for the good-will of the Indians, for those were the days when rivalry was keen amongst the traders, and all sorts of tricks were used to impress the Indians with their individual superiority. All winter he strutted and swaggered and clanked his sword, to the amusement of his rivals and the envy and admiration of Old Man's braves. Among these he made a sensation, for they had never seen such togger before. They hero-worshipped him and called him Long Knife.

To Old Man, weak, jealous and vain, and already smarting from defeat, this seemed the crowning misfortune of his life. He had counted



himself the greatest chief in the land, and set down his reverses to chance rather than to the superior prowess of his foes. But those reverses had shaken the confidence and alienated from him the affections of his warriors; and now with uttermost chagrin he saw the admiration of these at every turn bestowed upon the long-knifed chief, and he yearned to possess that glittering badge of unspeakable valour; for he foolishly believed that all that was necessary to enable him to bid defiance to Crazy Dog—the undivided confidence and admiration of his braves which he had once enjoyed—might be regained by the acquisition of that miraculous knife. It took all my father's persuasive powers, aided by the vengeance-denouncing prophecies of Yellow Wolf to bring him to reason; and even when accepting the terms of peace he could not repress the remark, "If I had the Englishman's knife I would not have to say those words."

With even more difficulty was Crazy Dog brought to accept the treaty. Of the charms of Old Man's daughter he was made well aware, nor was he indifferent to these; but it suited him to possess himself of them as he wished to possess himself of her country, and wear them as he would her father's scalp, the spoils of hate and war. And she,

THE VENGEANCE OF YELLOW WOLF 19

left out of the count except as so much merchandise, was in a quiet way asserting herself as a daughter of Eve. If his rivals in trade made sport of the Englishman and her father envied him his sword and the power he believed went with it, she did not care. He had a handsome face with close-curved golden hair, and these she worshipped, and laid her unsophisticated heart at his feet. Of this offering the haughty and self-absorbed Long Knife was long unaware; and so doubtless would have remained, had not Yellow Wolf, from whom nothing might be hid, one day announced that the next would see the arrival of Crazy Dog. The spring was on, the ice in the river had moved, yet broken and piled though it was, the chief's daughter rose at night and crossed to Long Knife's fort. There with innocent frankness she told him of her love, and of her determination not to wed with Crazy Dog; and ended by asking him to take her as his squaw. The Englishman had not yet learned that the friendship of a beaten tribe of Indians is even less desirable than the enmity of a victorious one, and so he took her at her word, and chuckled at having stolen a decided march on the rival traders.

The arrival next day of Crazy Dog spread dismay through the camp on the point, for thus

things stood: Old Man having sought his daughter where the conjurer announced her to be, in Long Knife's fort, returned without her, but with the coveted sword in his hand, and proud defiance in his heart. The ice, jammed when he crossed, was now crashing and roaring down the swollen stream, placing a line of death between him and the friendly forts and free prairie beyond. And Crazy Dog, approaching by the heel of the horse-shoe, halted his warriors in the only avenue of escape.

Old Man had assumed with the Englishman's sword an air of disdainful hauteur which, while it called up in the heart of his guests all the accumulated bitterness of generations of feud, woke no sympathy among his own people, who looked on in dogged and sullen silence. Stiff courtesies were exchanged. The peace-pipe was lighted; but before accepting it Crazy Dog bluntly demanded to be shown his bride. As bluntly he was told to seek her of Old Man's great brother, Long Knife the Englishman, whose squaw she was. Crazy Dog gave a grunt, rose and went back to his people.

Old Man knew what that meant. And Yellow Wolf knew, and straightway he betook himself to his conjuring tent and began his incantations.

THE VENGEANCE OF YELLOW WOLF 21

It was a strange monotonous chant that came through those leathern walls, a low wild wail of despair and mourning. But soon it changed. Gradually new elements came in, mingled with, absorbed the others, till loud over every sound the song arose, a trumpet-note of wild and confident command. And the tent shook and swayed and quivered, while countless voices of all things wild and fierce grew audible afar and slowly seemed to converge towards it. Meanwhile stealthy forms crept silently down, each minute diminishing the death-ringed plot where, in grim suspense, crouched Old Man and his people. Creeping, writhing, bounding, taking advantage of tree and stone, the braves of Crazy Dog advanced on the doomed camp of their foes.

Even to those in the forts on the opposite bank the sun was set, ere rose the deadly yell that told the tribes had met. But the struggle was short between Crazy Dog and Old Man. The latter met the tiger-rush of his foe with the Englishman's sword aloft; but he never struck. The Dog sprang under his lifted arm, drove his short knife to his heart, flashed it once round his fallen head and tore the scalp away; then on to the nearest brave. But the nearest brave fled, and they all fled men, women and children, back on the dead

stream with Crazy Dog and his braves behind. And there about the conjuring tent the traders saw through the evening's dusk death's wildest revel held. An hour later the last wigwam of Old Man's tribe was in ashes. Only the conjuring tent remained. Superstition had kept the hand of the foe from it; and because it remained the victorious warriors fled.

All through the fight the conjurer's song kept on. And now above the hoarse roar of the stream it rose, a dread monotony of fierce insistent will; while on the tent and all about lights danced and floated, wheeled and swung, and voices hideous beyond description moved with them. But still above all the voice of Yellow Wolf was heard. It grew louder, fiercer, more intense. And nearer and nearer the lights swung. Above the tent they gradually converged, till at length to the watchers they appeared as one great star, which rushed down into the tent, making it glow from within as if aflame. And now there seemed a very hell of voices there, but yet again the song of Yellow Wolf emerged above the whole. It seemed to grow into a power that rocked the very earth; till suddenly it culminated in one wild shout of hellish triumph; as out from the tent the light rushed again, leaving silence and darkness behind.

THE VENGEANCE OF YELLOW WOLF 23

It curved like a rocket across the sky, hung for a moment over Long Knife's fort, and fell

Next day Long Knife and his bride were found dead. On her throat were marks as of a wolf's fangs, and blue and warped with heat, the sword that had given him his name, stood in her husband's heart. But never a trace of Yellow Wolf was seen again. His tent stood scorched and empty. And for many a year it stood, and bleached a curse on the tragic scene, by red and white men shunned alike.

The Tripman of Assiniboia

IN those days when what is now Manitoba, and a goodly chunk of Uncle Sam's territory as well, was known as Assiniboia, there was a numerous, important class of population, the members of which were known as Tripmen. Some few of these still remain to tell of the glories of a calling that dwindled away before steamboats and railways, and is now as completely unknown as though it had never been. The importance of this class may be judged from the fact that, when at its height, there were fully one thousand employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, and other traders, in transportation either by land or water. The Tripman proper belonged to the water, and was in Assiniboia the successor of the voyageur of earlier days.

Partly on account of its geographical position, but chiefly on account of its population, the Red River settlement early became the headquarters of the distributing department of the Hudson's Bay Company. Between Fort Garry and York

Factory on Hudson Bay, brigades of from four to eight boats passed and repassed during the whole season of open water. These and indeed all the boats used by the Company, were the "York" boats, some few of which may still be seen. They were usually manned by nine men, and carried from three to four tons of freight. The round trip occupied about sixty days, for which the men were paid as follows: steersman, \$40, bowsman, \$35, and middlemen or rowers, \$30.

The duties of a steersman were to steer his boat, ability for which involved a thorough knowledge of every bit of dangerous water on the route, a thing to be acquired only by years of experience; and at portages to lift the bales or "pieces" as they were called, from the boat and place them on the back of the carriers. The bowsman, besides rowing and carrying at portages, had to stand in the bow of the boat at rapids and shoals and by word or sign apprise the steersman of the nature of the course ahead, and also to assist him in avoiding obstacles or keeping the boat in the proper course by means of a pole held in his hands for that purpose. The duties of middlemen included rowing, in calm weather or against adverse winds, "tracking" the boats at rapids and

other places where necessary, and carrying the goods across portages when loading or unloading.

Carrying was done by means of a "carrying strap". This consisted of a middle piece four inches wide and twenty inches long, to the end of which were attached thongs an inch wide or less, of sufficient length to tie around one of the bales to be carried. In carrying, the wide part of the strap passed across the forehead of the carrier, the bale to which the strap was attached rested on his back, while a second bale placed on top of the first, rested against his head. The average weight of a "piece" was about ninety pounds. With such a load the carrier would trot his one, two or several miles, as the case might be, up hill and down, over rocks and through muskeg, repeating the performance till the whole cargo was portaged; then the boat would be run down the rapid if the route was with the stream, if not the tracking-line was brought into requisition, and the boat tracked up. Here the carrying strap had another duty to perform. The ends being fastened to the tracking-line, the head-piece was passed over one shoulder and diagonally across the breast of the tracker. At very rapid places, the whole crew except the steersman and the bowsman, were placed on the line, to which straps were fastened at intervals,

thus allowing the men to walk one behind another. Even then, tracking was no such light affair as that idle fellow Jerome K. Jerome tells about. If the line broke, the one tracking was pretty sure to be reminded of it, by pitching forward and bumping his head on the rocks, unless he was fortunate enough to bump it on the one ahead.

One thrilling experience we remember hearing related by a tripman who professed to have had a part in it. In tracking up a rapid where the footing was of the most precarious sort, the boat having been caught by a cross current, took a sheer away from the shore, despite the whole united efforts of the crew. At the first warning the leading tracker succeeded in grasping a projecting rock to which he clung for dear life, while the boat hovered in mid stream, and more than one of his companions dangled by their straps above the swirling waters. Thanks to the grit and grip of the leader, the boat was soon headed shoreward and connection re-established between the badly-scared trackers and terra firma.

The York trip, however, was a very insignificant one as compared with the one performed by what was known as the Portage la Loche brigades. This brigade at one time numbered seventeen or eighteen boats, and left Fort Garry

usually in three divisions; the first started as soon as the ice in Lake Winnipeg would permit, the others following at intervals of about a week. This was done to avoid crowding and confusion at stopping places and portages. Their cargoes consisted of dried meat and pemmican, as well as butter and flour and other farm produce. But these were only taken as far as Norway House, where they were exchanged for cargoes of European goods brought up from York Factory the previous season. With these they proceeded westward across the lake and up the Saskatchewan, then northward by Cumberland House and Isle à la Crosse to Portage la Loche. Half way across this portage, which is twelve miles long, they exchanged their goods for the cargoes of furs brought back from the Mackenzie River and Athabasca districts.

This was generally accomplished by August the first. Then their course was retraced to Norway House. Here they collected any furs left on the way out, and proceeded to York Factory where they arrived about September the first. Ten days later, if not delayed by the non-arrival of the Company's annual ship, they started back laden with English goods. These goods were left at Norway House, to be forwarded to Athabasca and Mackenzie River the following year;

and so the brigade returned light or nearly so, to Fort Garry about October the tenth.

This is how the time card read; but adverse winds on any of the large lakes traversed, or low water in many small streams often played havoc with the calculations, so that often the time allowed between points was extended indefinitely. As a limited supply of provisions was allowed on these occasions, such dishes as moccasin soup and pemmican-bag stew took places on the bill-of-fare. These dishes, varied with boiled carrying-strap and reindeer-moss salad, are said to have been in vogue more than once on the home voyage from York Factory. One may think the names do not sound appetizing; but it is claimed that that was one of its principal effects; so much so that when a depot was reached, the men sometimes gorged themselves so as to be useless for days after.

The Portage la Loche men were paid \$100, \$90, and \$80—steersmen, bowsmen and middlemen—for the whole season's work. When at the height of its fame and usefulness, this brigade numbered about one hundred and sixty men. At Portage la Loche they were met by an equal number from the Athabasca and Mackenzie River districts. At the same time fully a hundred men were employed on the route between Fort Garry and York

Factory, while still another large brigade operated between the posts on the upper Saskatchewan and York Factory. This last brigade did not live to see the advent of steam, however, but succumbed to the far-famed Red River cart. When the number of carts plying between Fort Garry and St. Pauls came to number some fifteen hundred, the Company found it expedient to import much of its supplies in that way; and so the Saskatchewan supplies came to be sent overland to old Fort Carleton, some three hundred carts being employed on that route, under the care of a hundred men.

All these men, it may be said, were drafted from the population of the Red River settlement, the only exceptions being the few Indians employed in the western and northern brigades who, of course, would belong to their respective districts. But this number was always insignificant. The tripman almost invariably had European blood in his veins, and oftener than not that blood was French.

In the early days when the North West Company was the great power in the land, its voyageurs were French exclusively, while the boatmen of the rival company were mostly Scotchmen and Orkney men. After the union of these Companies, when agriculture began to progress, men of the

latter nationalities, on obtaining their discharges, settled down to farming. Their sons as a general rule followed their example, though the Indian blood in these sometimes unfitted them for occupations demanding unremitting toil and frugality. The conditions, too, that hampered agriculture and placed everything beyond a mere subsistence entirely out of reach of those engaged in it, brought not a few English-speaking people to engage in freighting by land and water. But the Frenchmen took to it naturally, especially those of mixed blood. But few of these engaged in farming. The voyageur who did not become a hunter, became a tripman. A great many of them became both, and their sons followed in their steps; so this element continued to the last to monopolize very largely the work of the tripman.

No wonder then that French came to be deemed the language of the tripman whether native to his tongue or not. The distinctive terms of the voyage are French, as witness: portage, décharge, demi-charge, couché and levé. A portage proper is where both boat and cargo had to be carried overland; a décharge, where the cargo was carried and the boat tracked up or run down the rapid, light; while the demicharge was where half cargoes

could be taken up, the boats then returning for the other half.

The names by which members of different brigades were distinguished, too, were French. While between tripmen everywhere there was a certain amount of fraternal feeling as against men of other callings, yet between those of different districts, rivalry and even jealousy was always very keen; and each had names for the others, which though not intended at first as complimentary, were generally accepted and retained by those to whom they were applied. A Red River man was "un Taureau". A Saskatchewan man was "un Blaireau", and one from the district beyond Portage la Loche was "un Poisson-blanc". Taureau (bull, the French name for pemmican) was the oldest of these names, and considered the most honourable. It originated while yet the North West Company flourished. The wild taureau-fed voyageur of the west looked with pitying contempt on the somewhat more civilized, and therefore in his estimation, comparatively effeminate voyageur from the East, whose staple diet was bacon. He believed his own taureau to be the best and strongest food in the world, and looked upon all other men as the haggis-fed Scot is said to regard the frog-eating Frenchmen. And so he expressed

his superlative of admiration when he styled himself "un Taureau" and his superlative of contempt when he called his down-cast brother "un Mangeur de Lard", and the superlative of contempt this latter term continued to express. To the Taureau and Blaireau the Poisson-blanc was an altogether inferior person, doubtless because they looked down on the food (white-fish) after which they named him; and for one of these to be dubbed "un poisson-blanc" by his comrades was a reproach not easily borne. But even the Poisson-blanc could bring the blush to his companion's cheek by calling him "Mangeur de Lard". Indeed all over the west, and even outside the class we are discussing, this term came to be one of common use as an equivalent for "good-for-nothing".

Another word, but one derived from the Indian, which had a similar meaning with the tripmen, was moon-ee-ass. This word which means a stranger, (some say one whose language is strange) was first applied by the Indians to the Gaelic-speaking colonists of Lord Selkirk on their arrival at York Factory. The name followed them on their journey to Red River, and since the management of boats and other duties peculiar to that journey was as strange to them as was their tongue to the ear of the Indian, the name by which they

were known quickly came to be a synonym for unhandiness or uselessness, and so, naturally enough, any man who exhibited this characteristic became a moon-ce-ass also. This term, however, did not convey quite the same degree of opprobrium as did the other, in as much as it permitted the implication that the person so stigmatized might learn and improve, which hope was not held out to the mangeur-de-lard.

These two words, so meaningless to the uninitiated, still survive, and may once in a long time greet the astonished ears as one moves about those parishes where the old element still predominates "like peaks of a submerged world" telling of things so strange, so unique, as may never again be witnessed.

Similarly "Blaireau" came to have a meaning not credited to it in the dictionaries. This name, the French for badger, was given to the Saskatchewan men because that animal was a usual item on their bill-of-fare. Now the Saskatchewan brigade had more Indian blood in it than any other, with less of the redeeming leaven of English and Scotch, consequently it became famous for the turbulence and insubordination of its members. So much so that their arrival at Norway House and other posts was looked upon as

an affliction and their departure as the most desirable event of the season. Thus boisterous and violent conduct came to be associated with their name. So when an old-timer characterizes a man or a horse as a regular blaireau, he is not to be understood as meaning that the man or horse bears any resemblance to a badger but, in conduct or disposition, to the typical Saskatchewan tripman.

As the working season of the tripman occupied from five to five and a half months, filled full of slavish work with which were associated hardships almost inconceivable, filled also with incidents and experiences of the most novel and thrilling sort, it could not be otherwise than that it should give a decided colour to his life for the rest of the year; and once or twice repeated, it left him a tripman and nothing else. The nature of the work unfitted him for the more prosaic walks of life, even if he had any inclination for them, which was not often. At the close of navigation some of these men joined the winter buffalo hunt on the plains, a few hired at odd jobs among the farmers, while the very large majority spent the winter among their friends in idleness and dissipation. Thus the proceeds of the past season's work were quickly spent; and long before the close of the year, applications for employment

during the next season, would be deluging the Company's office. In December, most of the men for the following year were engaged; and from then on till the brigades started instalments of wages were paid at stated intervals. The first payment furnished the necessities for the inevitable New Year's jubilation. As a rule, fully one half the wages were paid before the trip was begun, while much of the other half, if not all, was drawn by the families of the tripmen during their absence. Thus after their summer of toil and hardship, they returned as poor as when they started, to idle about and wait for the next opportunity for re-engagement.

This system of early engagement and payment in advance was, towards the end, at once a necessity and a curse to both employer and employee. As the settlement grew, other opportunities for temporary employment, especially in summer, were open to such of the tripman class as cared to avail themselves thereof. The quickly increasing cart-transportation, too, with its lighter work and shorter periods, yet with much of what was fascinating to the tripman, furnished a welcome alternative, while all that many of them required to live in happiness and luxury during the summer months was fresh air and a few fish-hooks. Thus

if the average tripman could have got through the winter without contracting obligations, the independence of the proverbial "hog on ice" would have been as nothing to his. None knew this better than his employers. So when what little might have been coming to him on the fulfilment of one engagement was expended, and the fattened calf of his friends duly devoured, the necessity of the Company, and in more recent years of private traders as well to secure men for the following season, met his necessity for the needs of the hour with open books and advances on the next year's work. This removed from a large number of tripmen their only incentive to exertion, and enabled them to pass the winter in comparative idleness—dancing, drinking, and fiddling. On the other hand it filled the lists of boatmen requisite to the next season's operations.

But the spring brought home to the employers the evil of the system. As the time to start the boats drew near, it invariably transpired that not a few of the men were missing. Then would ensue a time of searching for the delinquents. If found, threats, coaxing, and an additional advance of wages generally induced them to start; if not, others had to be procured. But sore vexation

of spirit and serious loss of time were results that could not be separated from the system

Nor was this all. At a comparatively early date, the Hudson's Bay Company, in its governing capacity, found its arm very often too short to reach, and oftener still too weak to punish, in an effective manner offenders of this and kindred classes; so the worst that threatened the mutinous tripman was the loss of a small installment payable in necessary supplies on his arrival at York, and such of his wages as had not been drawn by his family during his absence—which was not likely to amount to much. Hence this spirit of disloyalty to obligations, having but little to fear, was practically without a check, and so grew from year to year until it leavened the whole mass to that extent that even after the brigades got safely started, it still remained a matter of uncertainty how much of their contract they would perform. This was especially true of the Portage la Loche men.

Owing to the length of that voyage, it was not a favourite with such as were tripmen solely as a matter of necessity. Yet for reasons obvious enough, it was chiefly in that brigade that such men were to be found. And of course it was in it that the evils mentioned showed themselves,

working such mischief that about 1867 that once perfect organization practically went to pieces. The men sulked and loitered, and despite the efforts of the steersmen and guides—the captains and commodores of the fleet—consumed as much time in the ascent to Portage la Loche as they could; and ended by discharging their cargoes at Norway House instead of taking them on to York Factory, returning light to Fort Garry from that place. This was the beginning of the end. The government of Assiniboia, never too strong, was now in its death throes. The Company, too, was by this time fully as dependent on the tripman as the most shiftless of that class was on the Company, perhaps more so. And so the thing went on each year becoming worse till it finally resulted in the genesis of steam navigation on Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan.

It must not be assumed from the above, however, that all men of this class were dishonest, or that all the members of a brigade were alike mutinous. This would be very far indeed from the truth. But there was an amount of clannishness amongst them almost inconceivable and when a few persuaded themselves that they had a grievance, the rest could almost always be relied upon

to make common cause with them, no matter how unreasonable the claim might be.

A striking example of this happened when the Christmas instalment of wages was being paid in the year 1834. The accountant, Thomas Simpson, used insulting language to a tripman named Laroque, who returned the compliment in kind. Thereupon, Simpson seized a poker and laid open the skull of the audacious native. The news of this assault spread like wildfire, and soon tripmen and their friends were flocking from far and near. After some deliberation they formulated a demand that the accountant be handed over to them to be dealt with according to their ideas of justice, and as the gravity of the offence demanded. This demand was backed up by the threat that unless it was complied with, they would demolish Fort Garry and take the offender by force. So formidable did this threat appear to the governor, that he came at once to his marrow-bones, and accompanied by a couple of private traders, proceeded at ten o'clock at night to the house where the half-breeds were preparing themselves for the expected conflict by a genuine Indian war-dance. There, after a breezy parley of some hours' duration, the matter was compromised by the wounded man accepting his full season's wages together with a

discharge from his engagement. Ten gallons of rum were also given to his sympathizers—which they, doubtless, considered pretty liberal quid pro quo for the blood of the execrated Simpson.

A similar occurrence happened at Norway House in 1853. The Blaireau brigade, numbering eight boats, arrived there in June. One of their number, who had served two full terms in the employ of the Company, it seems, expected to get his discharge at that place, from which he intended to go to the Red River to settle; but Mr. Rowand, the master of the place, declared that the discharge would only be due when he had worked his passage to York, at which place alone it could be obtained. The man, however, claimed that his full time had expired and, failing to get his discharge, proceeded to discharge himself by going to the camp of some "freemen" and remaining there when the brigade took its departure. When his friends were thought to be safely out of the way, the poor fellow was promptly arrested, hand-cuffed and thrown into prison. It was evening when this was done. The brigade had been gone some hours, and so when a canoe, manned by the freemen already mentioned, put off in pursuit, no suspicion was aroused if indeed it was noticed at all. But the sequel was plain



when through the grey of the morning the inmates of the fort, aroused by songs and warwhoops, perceived a boat approaching loaded down with every Blaireau of the brigade. These men were French half-breeds and Indians, while their imprisoned brother was a son of "Ould Ireland, be dad!" yet at midnight they had thrown their cargoes on the beach and hastened to his rescue—not even the man responsible for the conduct of the expedition, Poulet Paul, guide of the brigade and champion of his district, remaining behind. Having secured an audience the release of the prisoner was demanded, his friends preferring to pay anything he might be owing on account of the unfinished trip to York. This was met by an unqualified refusal, so the Blaireaux turned their attention to war songs and paint, the indispensable preparatives for deeds of daring. In the midst of the excitement Dr Rac, the explorer, arrived, on his way to the Arctic Seas accompanied by Sir George Simpson. Sir George at once ordered the prisoner's release, and rated the officer in charge so roundly, that he won the goodwill of the rebellious Irishman, and not only was the fracas avoided, but Pat took his place in the brigade and completed the trip. But the war spirit of the Blaireau was aroused, and it took a liberal regal

of rum to bring him down to the oar and the carrying-strap again

When the ill-starred hulk, *Chief Commissioner* was launched at Lower Fort Garry in '87, the glory and usefulness of the tripman passed at once into the realms of ancient history; but the tripman, with his varied characteristics, survived for many years after. Indeed a man may still occasionally be met with who can count his trips to York or Portage la Loche by twenties or thirties.

As might be expected, these voyages furnished themes for many strange and wild stories. The inevitable slugging match, always without gloves and to a finish, between their several champions when the different brigades met at York, was a feature of the voyage fruitful of many a tall yarn. So was the rivalry between different boats' crews in sailing, tracking or portaging, and many hair-breadth escapes of individuals or crews from the wild fury of the rapids or the storm-swept lakes. Superstition entered largely into the tripman's make-up and he was not averse to being reputed to know more than he could be induced to tell of the mysterious and horrible "Wendigo", whose shrieks and cries had so often chilled his comrades' blood as they lay in the forest at night, and whose

taste for human flesh was made to account for the non-return of too-adventurous hunters, whose fate had not otherwise been explained. But the Indian medicine-man and his reputed power over things spiritual and material, was with him the favourite theme of all. Even yet if one meets one of these men it needs but little persuasion to send his memory, (or imagination) back thirty or forty years to some wild night when nature groaned and trembled, while the conjurer sang, and his tent shook and danced, and all the devils in the universe fluttered and howled and shrieked about him, all to procure a favourable wind, for which the brigade had paid down a trifling amount of tobacco and tea, and some such story as the following is the result —

"I think it was in '62, the last year I was on the trip. We were on the second trip to York; we were late getting home from the first one and now, of course, were late in starting. Well, no sooner had we left Fort Garry than the wind began to blow from the north and it took us just two days to get to the mouth of the river, and still it was head wind, not strong enough to stop us, but it made pulling very hard work, and the first day we were on the lake we made only about ten miles. I tell you what, we were tired when we

put ashore that evening. We camped on the lee side of a low sandy point, and we had scarcely fastened our boats when some Indians came to us and began to pitch their camp too. One of them was a great conjurer. Every year as the boats went to York the men used to hire him to tell them what sort of a trip they would have, or anything else they wanted to know. Well, someone asked him how long it was going to blow a north wind. 'It won't stop till I tell it,' said he. 'When you went past the last time I offered you a fair wind, and some of you laughed at me; but some did not laugh, you paid me and I got you a good wind. Now I want to show the men who laughed that I have power. That is why I brought this wind; they will have to use their paddles every day.' We knew at once that what he wanted was to be paid to get us a fair wind. I don't think any of us believed then that he could do what he said, but we knew we would have to give him something anyway before he would leave us, and we thought we might as well make him work for it; so the guide went about among the men and gathered up all the tea and tobacco he could get—about three pounds of tea and two of tobacco—and offered it to the medicine-man for a fair wind as far as Norway House. But the old

rascal only shook his head and said it would be very hard work. Well, before he would begin we had to give him about twenty pounds of pemmican and a new shirt, besides all the tea and tobacco. Then we had to make him a conjuring-house.

We went about half a mile to the woods and got twelve or fifteen pine poles about twelve feet long and two or three inches through. We pointed the big ends and sank them about three feet in the sand, in a circle about five feet across, so that when done they stood a great deal wider at the top than at the ground. Then we took ropes from the boat and drew the poles together at the top and tied them solid in a bunch. We covered it over with sails, and tied the whole thing round and round at the top and bottom and two places between. Last of all we drove stakes in the sand on the four sides and tied ropes from them to the top of the tent as tight as ever we could pull them. Meantime our medicine-man was sitting doubled up on the sand, smoking and singing to himself, and now and then telling us what to do. When the tent was ready he crawled into it, saying, 'As soon as the tent is made the wind stops, but it will be hard work to start it right.'

And sure enough we noticed it was a dead calm, not a breath of air stirring. We built the

tent a short way from the boats on the point of sand that lay to the north of them, and the Indians pitched their tents and made their fires a little farther back from the shore on the same point. Well, when everything was ready, it was properly dark. By-and-bye our medicine-man began to talk and sing, and pretty soon the tent began to shake, and the louder he sang the harder the tent shook. I tell you what, if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I would never believe it. Sometimes you would think it was going to lift right off the ground and again it would bend over to one side and then fly back, making the ropes to sing like fiddle-strings. If you had seen how that tent was built and fastened you would never believe anything in this world could move it, but when that devil got to work, it would tremble and shake till at last it would just be dancing.

Well, we were all sitting around watching it, not saying a word, and expecting every minute to see it fly off, when all of a sudden there was a noise up in the air. At first it was away off, soon it came nearer and nearer, till at last it was right over us—just like eagles fighting. You could hear them screaming and their wings flapping, then all at once down they seemed to come rushing like a whirlwind right into the top of the tent; and

in the tent we heard something fall with a bang that made the very earth shake; and away down you could hear a noise like distant thunder! Well sir, when whatever that was fell I thought there was an end to the conjurer, sure. For a while there was not a sound in the tent, nor outside either, and the tent left off shaking, too. But after a while we could hear voices in it. We could not make out what they were saying, but pretty soon we could tell that they were getting mad- they were quarrelling, sometimes more than one would be talking at once, but louder and louder all the time; then we could hear blows and the top of the tent seemed to fly open and something rushed up into the air, making the same noise we heard when it came down before. Then the tent began to shake again, and the Indian to sing, but soon we could not hear him for the noises all around. Away up in the air, near and far, you could hear birds and animals screaming and howling and fighting, while the whole place seemed to be filled with a storm of wind, rushing and moaning all about us, and over our heads, though we were sitting in a dead calm. Then the earth began to tremble and make a noise like distant thunder, but coming nearer and nearer all the time. And even the water in the lake was washing and

tumbling as if it were running out from the land I never heard the like in all my life! The night was as dark as pitch, and at last you could see light flashing through the sides of the tent and playing all over it. Still he kept singing and still the tent danced and shook and jumped. Yes, sir, sometimes it seemed to jump right up from the ground, and then fall down again; and still we sat looking on, and the noises up in the air got louder and louder, till by-and-bye again down something came as before, right into the top of the tent. Then there was a flash like lightning and such a crash of thunder as made us all jump to our feet; and then another flash and another, and clap after clap and such a storm of wind from the west as almost blew us into the lake. The only way we saved ourselves was by lying flat on the sand; but the wigwams of the poor Indians caught it! For the first squall sent the birchbark flying. Some of it blew right through the fire and came blazing and crackling over us, and right up against the conjuring-house. Some of us sprang to save our sails, but we were too late; they were all in a blaze in a minute; and still the conjurer was singing away inside. And the birds, and beasts, were they still in the air? Well I can't say for sure. I did not notice in the excitement,

and besides one could not hear for the thunder and the wind. But soon Mr. Medicine-man stopped singing and the yell he gave when he found the tent was on fire, was something to make our ears ring. And it was a sight to see him, come out of that tent, his hair and shirt—that was all the clothes he had on—all in a blaze, and make for the water. I do not know whether he thought we had set the tent on fire, or whether it was because we laughed so hard, but when he came out of the lake he was about the maddest Indian I ever saw. He just stopped long enough to call us a lot of dogs, and to say that he would make us sorry for that yet. Then off he started for the woods, his whole tribe after him—the men yelling, the women screaming, the children crying, and dogs howling, making more noise than the thunder, wind and all the spirits together. For about half an hour it poured, then the storm passed, and in less than an hour the night was as calm and clear as could be."

"But of course the wind you paid for was on hand next day! You got value for your tobacco and pemmican?"

"Well, to be sure we hoisted our sails next morning, and never took them in again, except at night, till we reached Norway House; but when

that red devil said he would make us sorry, I knew we would have trouble before we got home, and and so we did."

Just how far the tripman believed the professions of the medicine-men regarding their power over the elements, it is difficult to judge. That is a point on which all are reticent. But if the wind and weather became favourable within a reasonable time after the intervention of a conjurer, the tripman will not scruple to admit that it happened so anyway; not asserting any belief in cause-and-effect relationship between the two things, but naively ignoring the fact that wind and weather are changeable things at any time. Indeed it is amusing to notice how ingeniously the most ordinary phenomena happening during these performances can be coloured and contorted in the narration so as to fit in with the belief he will not openly acknowledge; as in the incident quoted, the flight of wild fowl, the cries of wolves and other beasts, and all the evidences of the approaching storm are ascribed without a pause to the "devilish cantrip sleight" of the medicine-man and accepted as a part of the process by which the wind is to be influenced. One thing, however, they never hesitate to claim, that on such occasions the medicine-man can prophesy with unerring



certainty. In support of this they will cite instances galore of things foretold which duly came to pass, as well as events announced, that occurred hundreds of miles away, and which subsequently, were found to have so happened. And even when wind and weather required no adjustment, the conjurer was sometimes employed to obtain news from the tripman's distant home, and the results reported are such as would delight the editor of *Borderland*. Deaths occurring since the departure of the brigade were faithfully reported, also the faithlessness of wife or sweetheart, or anything else of importance to the inquirers; and such announcements made in the hearing of the whole brigade are claimed to have been verified, over and over again. Indeed so persistently are such claims made—and this not only by men of this class, but not infrequently by persons of education and superior intelligence as well—that even the most skeptical, in time are forced to admit that there may be something in it.

Among the tripmen, as among men of all classes and occupations, there were, of course, some who stood out boldly above the general level of the fraternity. Two of these were Alexis L'Esperance and Baptiste Bruce, who became guides to the Portage la Loche brigade, the former

in 1833, and the latter in 1848, and retained their positions as such as long as that method of transportation continued. They are said to have been so well acquainted with every rapid, shoal and lake on the route, that even in the darkest night they would push forward when pressed for time. They were the commodores of the fleet, and the steersmen were captains under them. They were responsible for the conduct of their several divisions, led the way at all dangerous or difficult places, and transacted the business of the brigade at the posts along the route.

It is difficult now to get any definite information regarding these men, but it goes without saying that they must have been exceptional in more ways than one. Their long terms of faithful and efficient service in a responsible and difficult position would alone mark them as such. But to hold the confidence of their employers must have been an easy matter compared with that of holding the confidence and allegiance of the men over whom they were placed. Knowing what the average tripman was, one feels safe in estimating the make-up of the men who led and controlled them, with the exception of a few occasions, during the long period of thirty and forty years respectively. With physical strength must have

been combined a readiness of resource equal to every emergency and courage of the sort that never stops to reckon danger—courage to dare, and will, and strength to do. All that was best in the tripman seems to have been magnified in them, while much of the worst was wanting. It is quite evident that the secret of their influence and success was beyond the tripman's power to analyze, for he had little to say about them beyond that they were wonderful guides.

Quite different it is with regard to Poulet Paul, for a long time guide to the Saskatchewan brigade. Between him and his class there seems to have been closer sympathy; and incidents in his career are not wanting, from its beginning to his tragic death—instigated it is said by a rival who hoped to succeed him as a guide—and these incidents show him to be just such a man as the average tripman might admire and love.

He was a capable and efficient guide; but he was much more than that. To begin with, he was picturesque. A giant in stature and strength, beardless but shock-headed and black as crebus; with a voice like thunder and a manner as blustery and boisterous as March, eyes like an eagle and a pair of fists as heavy and once, at least, as deadly as cannon balls. This was on a time when two

Stony Indians waylaid and attempted to rob him of the horse on which he was riding. Poulet jumped from his steed, let out right and left, and straight there was joy in the happy hunting grounds over the arrival of two good Indians, while on the banks of the Saskatchewan there was equal joy at the departure of the two bad Stonys.

Besides being guide of his brigade, Poulet was its champion; not merely in such affairs as were mentioned as happening at Norway House, but on any and every occasion when a champion was required. When the different brigades met at York Factory, and the question which could produce the best man, came to be mooted over a regal of Hudson's Bay rum, he was ever the first to strip to the waist and stand forth to claim that honour for the Blaireau. That was the sort of man the tripman adored; and even those of the Red River who still survive have a big warm place in their hearts for Poulet, and tell of his deeds, and give him as much honour as if he had been one of themselves. This may be partly because in doing so they glorify their own champion, Michael Lambert, who on such occasions would step forward in the interests of the Taureaux, shake hands with Poulet, and then for the next

half hour or so, proceed to enhance his picturesqueness to such a degree that his own dog would not recognize him. Such encounters, off-hand at first no doubt, and having their inspiration in the rum keg, came to be a recognized institution of the trip. It was known when the brigades left Fort Garry what champions went along, and as they returned up the river in the fall, friends hailed them from the banks for news of the expected fight. Of course, there were other minor events at such points as Norway House or Portage la Loche with the Poisson-blanc; but it was on that of York Factory, when Paul and Lambert stood up for the honour of their respective districts, that interest chiefly centred—when Taureau, Blaireau and Muskegoo crowded round and watched the championship of all the west tossed back and forth with Poulet's ferocious pounding and the lightning-like science of Lambert --but inevitably to remain with the latter

Lambert's successful defence of the championship on all or nearly all occasions when that task fell to him was generally attributed to his quickness of movement. But he was more than quick, he could do the knock-out trick as well as Fitzsimmons or any of them, and seems to have been an all-round good one. Having come to the

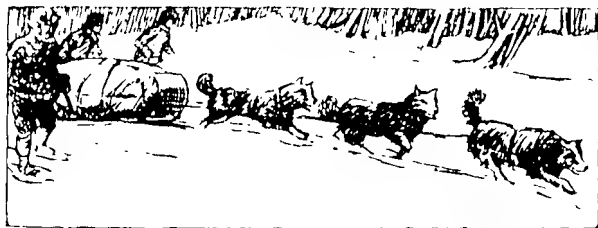
Northwest in 1817 as a soldier in Lord Selkirk's filibustering force, he must have been pretty well on in years in the fifties, yet when about that time the captain of the ship *Prince of Wales* brought a huge sailor ashore to show the natives how an Englishman could handle them, it took but one blow from Michael to send him back for repairs—a broken collar-bone being the extent of the damage. He was the darling of the Taureaux, not because he partook of their character to any great extent but because of his prowess in the ring. They liked Poulet because he was a hard man to beat, but they adored Michael because he could beat Poulet.

The latter was shot at Edmonton, while yet comparatively young, by an Indian in the employ of another tripman who was jealous of his reputation in the ring, and who wanted his place as guide. Lambert lived to a good old age in the parish of St. Andrew's where he died not so many years ago

Then, too, there was Jimmy Short, otherwise known as Checkam, who could also put up an ugly fight -when he could not get out of it. He too had stood up for the honour of the Taureaux against Poulet, but only to be knocked out. Still

he had lived to tell the tale and that alone was an honour not to be despised.

Writing of the tripman, in 1869, Mr. J. J. Hargrave says, "As a class the Portage la Loche tripmen rank very low indeed in the colony. Their priests profess a certain influence over them, but they confess that their flock is disreputable." This may seem a little severe, but it is undeniable that as a member of the general community they can scarcely be classed as satisfactory. Their influence on the history of Assiniboia, if peculiar, and exercised in a peculiar manner was, however, not inconsiderable, nor in the light of ultimate results can one feel like setting it down as wholly evil. Ordinarily happy-go-lucky, yet easily excited, fearless, athletic and fierce, we can see how serious an affray they were capable of creating over a matter that would have caused no excitement whatever in another class of men. This gave them with some the reputation of being lawless, savage and altogether bad; but without granting this in all its sweeping significance, we would recall that it was chiefly the uprising of this class and its kindred, the hunter-traders, that shook to crumbling the government machinery of the old regime and so made necessary and possible the establishment of the present order of things.



Gaspard The Voyageur

Chapter I

Away back in the first years of the nineteenth century, the white population of the Red River Valley was comprised within the walls of three or four trading posts, and a few log huts, which early collected in the vicinity of the place then known as "The Forks"

One September afternoon, at the door of one of these huts, sat Jean Lavecque and his daughter, Marie. The hut stood in a sequestered position on the north bank of the Assiniboine, much nearer to its junction with the Red than the Fort itself.

(Slowly a sound, unheard on those waters now as it would be unheeded, fell upon their ears and grew and grew till it seemed to burden the dreamy air. It seemed to come from down the stream, but uncertain and fitful, it mocked and eluded the ears it charmed. The listeners hailed the first note with emotion, for well they knew, in that wilderness of silence, it was the song of the voyageur.

Little wonder that their faces were alive with keenest interest for in his young days Jean himself had been a voyageur. For years in the service of the Canadian traders, he had traversed the sinuous waterways of the wild and wonderful West, then the home of the wild beast and the Indian. A perfect type of his class, he had loved with a very passion his hazardous calling, and had faced, with laugh and song, its toils and dangers. But his adventurous spirit had found a new enchantment in the "buffalo hunts" of the western plains. Yielding to the new charm, he built his hut, and others of his countrymen followed his example, and settled down on the banks of the Assiniboine. Here his daughter was born, and here, after he had laid to rest on the sunny slope of the river's bank her Indian mother, he had watched and tended her with almost idolatrous love throughout infancy and childhood; and here after he had been brought home from the chase, maimed and

crippled for life, had this daughter watched and cared for him.

At the time of the accident, three years before, Marie was but a girl of fourteen. Her father had been her companion, her teacher, her friend. So now she determined to try to repay all his untiring care for her. She never left him except when her household tasks forced her, and she attended to all his wants with the most loving consideration. So at seventeen she had acquired a womanliness beyond her years. On this September day she made a pleasing picture at the door of the hut. Her blanket suit, belted at the waist, hung in rather heavy folds and straight lines about her slim figure; but its dark red shade seemed to heighten the rich colour of her cheeks, and relieve the clear olive complexion. Her thick wavy dark brown hair was drawn back from her small oval face and tied at the neck, rippling freely below its bonds; while her large, lustrous, dark eyes, with their mild, sweet expression, beamed with excitement as she listened to the song.

Soon a canoe shot round the bend below, and the song burst into full chorus, while a cheer went up from the little crowd already assembled at the landing.

"Ah! that is one of the Partners," said Jean. "some of the good old boys will be with him."

Run, Marie, and see if any of my old friends are there, and ask them to come "

As the canoe glided to the shore, in its bow stood a young voyageur of perhaps twenty-five. He was so tall and withal so well proportioned that he seemed the very embodiment of strength and activity. His face was fair, his features strong and regular, and his eyes of the darkest blue. His bearing and manner told at first glance that he was a man of brave and generous nature. Though toiling at the paddles like the rest, his companions dubbed him "Le Duc"

Marie forgot her errand. She stood apart from the crowd, with eyes following every movement of this handsome stranger. Suddenly the kindly blue eyes looked straight into hers with such unconcealed admiration that she was covered with confusion. Just in time to relieve her embarrassment she was accosted by an old voyageur.

"Ah! ma belle Marie! you will pardon me, I am sure, for not recognizing you soonèr, when I tell you it is because you have grown so handsome. You did not recognize me of course, because, parbleu! I grow fast the other way. But how does mon bon camarade, your father?"

She told him about her father's condition and of her errand to the landing. He promised to go and spend the evening, adding "I shall bring

a friend to talk with you while my good friend, Jean, and I talk over the old days on the voyage."

An hour later at the door of Jean Lavecque's hut sits Gaspard, the handsome voyageur, and Marie, while within, on his bed lies Jean and seated by his side his old friend Pierre. Their theme, of course, the voyage. Pierre talks rapidly and gaily of everything connected with it, past and present. They recall countless incidents of the days they worked together on the same batteau, or struggled together for life in the treacherous rapids of the rushing Ouinipique; of trading keen and sharp to outwit "les Anglais", the Hudson's Bay men, on the far-off Saskatchewan; of the Nor'-West partners (Macdonell, Le Grand, Capitaine, McGillivray, Mackenzie, and McLeod), of the glorious carousals when the year's business was ended, in which these wealthy fur-kings mingled with the men, danced, sang and drank till morning. Thus they lived over again the best days of their lives.

And the other two, what an evening they passed! They, too, talked of the voyage, Gaspard graphically portraying its wild excitements and its deadly perils. Marie recounted many exciting incidents of her free and joyous life before her father's accident, while Gaspard described his boyhood days in far-off Canada. How their

acquaintance sped! And when Pierre rose to go, they were as well acquainted as if they had been playmates. The boat left early next morning, so they must go, but they would call again in the morning for a last "Good-bye".

At an early hour Pierre and Gaspard were again at the hut. Evidently Pierre had not forgotten that he had once been young; first he insisted that Marie must come to see them start; then he remembered that he had still a word to say to his "bon camarade", and returned to say it. The two young people walked on in silence. Words would not come. The thought of parting weighed heavily. At last Gaspard said abruptly, "I shall come again with the canoes next season, if Providence allows."

But a lump had risen in Marie's throat, and she dare not speak. This promise of next year's visit afforded little consolation; the time was so remote, and the distance between his home in Canada and hers on the banks of the Red River, so great! But they must say good-bye for Pierre would soon be with them. She put out her hand. Gaspard clasped it, then suddenly kissed it passionately, saying: "Ah! Marie, I love you! I cannot go without the hope that you will think of me sometimes, and that you will go with me to Canada."

"No! no Gaspard, do not ask me. My father—"

"Hallo, mon Gaspard! Monsieur is at the batteau. Parbleu! but he will bless us for making him wait."

And Pierre, shaking the hand of the confused Marie, and taking Gaspard by the arm, dashed along in the direction of the canoe. In less time than it takes to tell, they had cleared the fringe of willows, and were in their places. The paddles dipped, the voyage song rose, and they were away. Marie stood watching them descend the stream, but they vanished in a mist that was not on the river. Then she turned slowly homeward to take again the burdens of her lonely life.

CHAPTER II

On the last day of this same year, in a fort lately erected by the Hudson's Bay Company on the east bank of the Red River a little above the forks, two men were seated at a table, on which stood bottles and glasses. One was Mr. Dwight the master of the place, and the other Mr. Williams who had charge of a similar establishment some twenty-five miles down the river. Both were Englishmen, and both had seen much of life in

the fur-trading business on Hudson Bay. Their conversation was in this strain:—

"Tut! fill your glass, man, and be cheerful. It is the easiest thing in the world to leave your pemmican for the present, and take the girl along. Why, with this fall of snow, the hunters will not be here for days yet, so you have the very best chance in the world."

"Take her along! That sounds easy, but what if she won't go?"

"Won't go! Well, I should know how to make her go, if I were in your place. She should go if it cost me the best pair of blankets in the fort, or, rather if it cost the Company that."

"Well, I should think it would be a good pair of blankets, and no mistake, that would get that girl. All the blankets in your fort could not do it. Why, her old father—"

"Let her old father keep her, then! If you can't get one take another. One would think you were a boy and in love, to hear you talk."

"It's possible to be in love and yet not be a boy, Dwight. At any rate, there is only one girl in this whole blasted country that is of any use to Capt Williams. And I would give my horse this minute, even if it is the fastest in the country, if I could get her."

"I did not know you had a horse. I didn't see one at your fort as I came up."

"He wasn't at home that day or you would have seen him. He's as fine a beast as you ever clapped eyes on, and fast too. He can run all day at the heels of the fastest buffalo that ever lived."

"Oh! tell that yarn to some one else. A fine horse it must be that you would give for a squaw, when that article is so plentiful, and horses so scarce."

"If you had seen him, Dwight, you would want to buy him and take a run at the buffalo in the spring. If I could ride like you, I should do that myself."

"And just because you can't hunt buffalo you would trade him for a squaw. Why do you not sell him?"

"This girl is not a squaw; she is French, a half-breed perhaps, but the very prettiest girl you could see anywhere. She has the most magnificent pair of eyes—"

"Oh! ho, ho! For mercy's sake! Eyes! What in thunder is an old baldheaded corpulent stager like you raving about eyes for? Don't make a fool of yourself. Sell the horse to me, and take the best pair of red blankets, or two pair for that matter, and go to the next camp of Indians, or

half-breeds, if that suits you better, and get a wife who is willing to have you."

"You may laugh if you like, Dwight, but as I said before, there is only one woman that suits me, and that is old Lavecque's daughter."

"Lavecque! I wonder if he is the man of that name I used to know. Jean Lavecque, his name was."

"That's the name. And I believe he would take the horse too, if he were only able to ride one; but—"

"Of course the girl is quite willing? Took to you at first sight, I suppose."

"The deuce she is! If she were satisfied, the old man would be. I will tell you the whole story, Dwight. A month ago I came up to bespeak a supply of meat from those half-breed dogs, and I met her at the cabin of the man I engaged to procure it. He told me who she was, and then spun a long yarn about her father's fame as a hunter, and the number of buffalo he had been known to kill in one run. So I looked about and bought this horse, thinking that I could secure the girl in that way. But when I went to see her father, I found he was bed-ridden. So of course the horse would not take. Then I turned to, and made love to the girl as fervently as I could have

done thirty years ago. She wouldn't listen to me. And if there hadn't been so many bloody Bois-Brulés Nor'westers about, I would have taught her how to talk to an English gentleman."

"Don't get excited, man! That's right, fill your tumbler."

They filled and drained their glasses, and then Dwight asked,

"How much do you want for that horse?"

"Thirty pounds."

"Thirty pounds! You don't mean it?"

"You can't get one for less, at least, not one like mine."

"I don't want one like yours then, if that is what he is going to cost!"

"Well, one might as well talk of taking buffalo with a pack horse, as one you can buy for less."

"All that may be true, but you would not skin an old friend. The animal never cost you that, unless you've lost the knack of trading."

"That's my price, and I call it low enough."

After drinking in silence for a time, Dwight arose, and slapping Williams on the shoulder, exclaimed;

"I have it! I want the horse, and you want old Lavecque's daughter. You promise to send

me the horse in the spring, and I will send you home to night with her strapped to your sled. Is it a bargain?"

"Yes, but how—"

"Never mind how. Say you agree, and then I will tell you how."

"Certainly! Get me the girl, and you may have the horse."

"Fill your pipe, then and I will tell you how we will work it, if her father is bed-ridden as you say."

"I knew Jean Lavecque well nigh twenty years ago. In fact he saved my life, and we were quite friendly, even though he was a thieving Nor'wester. Well, I will be friendly again with him, and believe I can get round him that way. But if I can't, why, by the great horn spoon! I shall lay claim to the lass. He cannot refute it, and now as he is helpless, you just bet we'll make it work."

CHAPTER III

While this conversation is in progress, a solitary traveller is seated by a fire in a pine forest some miles to the eastward, preparing his mid-day meal. It is Gaspard. The snow is falling softly,

and as he turns a spit, he softly hums a snatch of some voyage song

“Ya longtemps que je t’aime
Jamais je ne t’oublierai.”

When he had parted with Marie that September morning, his mind was in a whirl. Their parting and their whole acquaintance indeed was so short, so rapid, so confused; but one thing was clear enough. She had refused him. Still as he plied his paddles day after day, on that long voyage eastward, he had ample time to think the matter out. He believed she loved him, for a hundred subtle signs had told him so. Then why had she refused him? The more he thought about it the plainer it was that she had refused to leave her father. How could she have done otherwise! He had been a fool. If he had plainly and simply asked her to marry him, and offered to come and live at Red River, then he would have known the truth. He would know it anyway! He would see her again, and before the sailing of the next canoes. So his plans for the future grew into plans for the present. At the Kaministiquia, the work of the voyage ended, with rifle on shoulder, snow-shoes on feet, and a bundle on his back, he turned his steps towards the Red River.

He followed as nearly as possible the usual route, till the Lake of the Woods was reached. From thence he shaped his course direct for the Forks.

It was a long and weary tramp through a pathless wilderness, yet, here he is singing gaily a light *chanson* as he turns on the spit the venison that is to make his meal. The day was mild, and as evening drew on the snow fell thick and fast, when he reached the Red River it was quite dark. He crossed over to the well remembered hut of Jean Lavecque, knocked, but received no answer. He opened the door, however, and entered. The hut seemed deserted, though embers still smouldered on the hearth. What could it mean? Then a moan came from the gloomy recess beyond the fireplace. Gaspard stepped forward and as he did so, he noticed that the bed on which Marie's father had lain when last he was there, was still occupied. But as he approached the bed the invalid covered his face with his hands and moaned:

"You have nothing to tell me? Oh! Mon Dieu! She is gone! She is gone!"

"Gone!" said Gaspard, "who is gone? Not Marie, surely! Oh Heaven, gone where? Monsieur Lavecque, tell me! what does it mean?"

At the sound of the strange voice the invalid uncovered his face, and by the dim light of the dying embers, recognized Gaspard.

"Oh! Monsieur Gaspard! She is gone! Ma Marie. You knew her! the sweetest demoiselle that ever lived! Les Anglais, two of them, came here, and took her away. One of them wanted her for his wife, but she would not go. And then the other—oh! mon Dieu! the liar—the fiend! He said she was his child. I knew him. I saved his life once, and this is how he thanks me."

At this the invalid sobbed aloud.

Suddenly the door opened, and four men came in. From them Gaspard learned the shameful story.

Shortly after the two villains left the hut with their victim, a man from the North-West Company's fort happened along, and learning what had occurred, returned to their fort, and with three others started in pursuit. They crossed the river to the Hudson's Bay post. Dwight denied all knowledge of the affair, and willingly showed them through his establishment to convince them that the object of their search was not there. They had now returned to report their failure. With rifles and snowshoes they were ready to start for

Williams' fort, as the only other to which she could have been taken.

After building a fire, and making Jean a little more comfortable, they started. Gaspard had tramped the livelong day, and had not sat down since reaching the Forks, yet he was the foremost on the trail. For an hour they toiled through the falling snow, then clouds began to break, and soon they were tramping under the dazzling light of moon and stars. When about half the distance was traversed, a shout burst from them, as they noticed deep in the loose snow, the trail of a sled. Then in silence they dashed along, following this, as mile after mile it became plainer. With the hope of overtaking the heavily-loaded sleigh, their spirits rose and their pace quickened. But their hope was not to be realized. Once where the river turned suddenly to the westward they thought they saw a dark object ascend the right bank and disappear in the woods. When they reached the spot, they found that the sleigh had actually left the river there. Still following the trail they made their way through giant elms and maples till they came to what seemed a swamp, but gradually deepened till it assumed the appearance of a narrow river. Following this lagoon till it neared the point of its junction with the river, the trail again

turned to the right and entered the woods. Up this ascent they dashed to find themselves at the very gate of Fort Williams. The gate stood open. The trail led to a building in the center of the enclosure. There in their harness were the dogs. In a moment Gaspard and his companions were knocking at the door. There were sounds of commotion within, and presently a voice asked:

"Who are you, and what do you want?"

"Men from the Forks", answered Gaspard, "and we want Marie Lavecque."

"There is no such person here; I do not even know such a person. I do not know what you mean."

"We mean that you have carried off Marie Lavecque from her father, and brought her here. She is here now, and we are going to take her back to her father."

"There is no woman here. If you do not go away at once, we will make you sorry for staying."

"We have come for Marie Lavecque, and we are not going without her. You lie when you say she is not here. Give her up and we will go quietly."

"You may go as you please, but I tell you if you do not go at once, I shall order my men to fire."

As there were no port-holes open on that side, they did not attach much importance to this threat, and replied:

"You had better give her up, for if you don't we will burn your fort."

"If you can burn green logs, burn away, and be shot while you are trying."

They saw that nothing was to be gained by talk, so an attempt was made to force the door, but without success. Then Gaspard and the others withdrew out of range, to hold a consultation.

CHAPTER IV

About the time that Williams had been perceived by his pursuers, his driver had also discovered their presence in the rear, and all possible haste was made to reach Fort Williams.

While Williams was undoing the cords which bound Marie to the sled the driver was trying to arouse the garrison that numbered about six men. But in his fear and excitement, he managed to create the impression that an army was even then at their heels about to attack the fort, and that the safest place just then was the woods, whither they proceeded to take themselves, seizing such articles of clothing as they could get, in the hurry

of their flight. So when Williams carried the numbed form of his captive into the fort, and looked about him, he found himself alone with his frightened driver.

Nothing daunted he proceeded to secure his position by closing and barricading the doors. Against the rear door through which the garrison had fled, he piled boxes and bales of goods, and against the other, in addition to a strong iron bar with which it was fastened, he leaned a heavy log, one end of which rested against a partition some ten feet away. This done, he ordered the driver to mount to the second story, knock the blocks from the port-holes, and open fire on the first enemy that appeared. Just then came the pounding on the door, and the driver, seeing a good hiding-place, bolted into it.

Roughly forcing a handkerchief between the teeth of Marie, Williams threw a muffler about her head, and pinioned her arms with a similar article. Then, taking a flask from his pocket and draining it, he turned his attention to his unwelcome visitors.

He saw it was useless to try to put them off by denial, and to resist single handed the attack of five men for any length of time, was out of the question. Bravado and stratagem, then, were the

only weapons left him, and in his half-drunken condition these were the most congenial.

So when his assailants withdrew after trying to force the door, he watched them through the chinks, and as they were at a safe distance, he thought it time to act. So removing the log, and poising on its edge a full barrel of rum, opened the door and rolled it out on the snow.

"Drink, dogs," he shouted, "to my bride and a Happy New Year!"

And slamming the door to, he dropped the bar into its place, just in time to check their united rush. The door creaked and strained, but the bar held firm.

Marie had recovered from the numbness caused by her long and hard journey, and had succeeded in freeing herself from her hastily-adjusted fetters, so when the door opened she ran forward, in the hope of reaching her friends. She was too late; the bar was up, and Williams with his back towards her, was busy raising the log into position. She tried to undo the bar, but the strain from without was too great. Then Williams saw her, and dropping the log, seized her and flung her across the room with such force, that she shrieked with pain. Then again bent to his task.

But Marie's shriek was his undoing, for madened by the sound, Gaspard sprang to the rumbarrel, and lifting it as though it were a bauble, poised it on his shoulder, and rushed forward. The door went down with a crash, and quick as thought they were inside.

Gaspard turned his attention to Marie, and bore her fainting form to the next room where the fire was. While the others, finding no one to oppose them, looked about in silence. Then a groan came from beneath the shattered door. They lifted it and there lay Williams, his head crushed beneath the log he grasped. They laid him in as comfortable a place as they could find, then set to closing the door, and making themselves comfortable for the night.

The sound of Gaspard's voice, seemed to restore Marie to consciousness, for murmuring "Gaspard" she opened her eyes to see bending over her Gaspard, himself.

Rested and refreshed, the party started back in the early morning; the horse that was to have been Marie's prize drawing the sled on which they rode. Great was the rejoicing at the Forks when they arrived. During the night the hunters had come in from the plains, keen for the rude festivities of the season. And now the tide of New

Year merry-making flowed on with more of joy than usual, for that same day there was a wedding at the Forks. A wedding peculiar to the times; with lots of dancing and feasting—plenty of everything but ceremony. There was no priest in the land then; but hearts that God had joined together, what should keep asunder?

Lo, the Poor Indian and the Hudson's Bay Company

AS a corporation trading with people not always supposed to be capable of guarding their own interests, the Hudson's Bay Company have always enjoyed a reputation for the strictest honesty. And the exceptionally friendly nature of their long commercial intercourse with the Indians would seem proof sufficient to establish such a reputation, for the Indian is quite as capable of detecting fraudulent dealing as any man, just as quick to resent it, and his confidence once lost its almost impossible to regain it. Hence the strictest adherence to promises and prices was a rule no trader dare ignore. Such a thing as breach of promise, made either to a tribe or an individual, meant loss of traffic, and doubtless, more serious trouble even. The asking of a higher price for a given article from one person than from another, was equally dangerous, and to be avoided, but the privilege of pricing their own goods, and those of the Indian as well, left ample room to guard

against loss without resorting to the too-common trick of the small tradesman, of putting prices high or low according to his estimate of the party outside the counter. And if all we read regarding the Company borders near the region of truth, that enviable reputation would seem to be rather a far-fetched credit after all. The current story of the origin of the "trading gun", whether true or not, appears to illustrate to a nicety the scrupulous honour with which the Company adhered to its word. The Indians, having protested against the price of guns, which was as many sable skins as could be piled one above another along the gun as it stood upright on the floor, it was agreed on behalf of the Company that in future years the price would be reduced from the full height of the gun to the first ring, or ram-rod holder. When this was reflected on by the head men of the Company, however, it was decided that it involved too great a loss. But the word of the honourable Company had to be kept—faith with the Indian could not be broken. So when the next year's trade opened the Indian got his gun at the stipulated price; but a comparison showed that the first ring on the new piece came exactly level with the muzzle of the old ones!

In a pamphlet published in 1846, entitled *A Few Words About the Hudson's Bay Company*

we find a "Tariff of prices employed by the Hudson's Bay Company in licensed territory east of the Rocky Mountains". At the time this tariff was in use "the entire value of all the furs and other articles traded by the Company from the Indians in all its territories and possessions averaged less than £200,000 per annum. In one year it amounted to £211,000 and the net profits that year were declared at £119,000!!!"

A glance at the tariff will explain the possibility of such an extraordinary result, as well as show some rather curious angles in the reputed square dealing of the Company.

The first item given is a gun, the first cost of which is placed at twenty-two shillings. To this should be added thirty-three and one third per cent. which the Company calculated covered the cost of placing their goods in the Indian countries. This would make the net cost of the gun \$7.22; and the price charged for it was twenty "beavers". Now the beaver was the standard of valuation when dealing with Indians; three martens were worth one beaver, one silver fox equalled four beavers, one lynx one beaver, one otter one beaver, etc. This gun was sold to the Indian for twenty beavers, which if paid in beaver skins represented a value of \$162.50, as the market-value of a beaver

skin is given at \$8.12½. Now one would think this a good enough price for a gun costing \$7.25; but if the Indian were under the necessity of paying those twenty beavers in marten skins, his gun would cost him the fine sum of \$232.50, and in silver fox skins it would cost him a round \$250.00 on account of the relative values of these furs in the markets of Europe. If, however, he paid it in otter skins he got his gun for \$117.50, and in lynx skins for \$100.00. But the poor Indian did not study the markets. There were many circumstances to prevent him from reading the daily papers, so as long as the Company allowed him four beavers for a silver fox he was happy.

Thus the profits of the Company varied on each article according to the kind of pelt they received in payment. But they do not seem to have carried any article into the country with the idea of losing on the venture. Assuming that each article was paid for in silver fox skins, they charged for one gill of powder \$12.50, for 18 bullets the same, for ten gun-flints the same. The first cost of each of the last two items is given at one penny. An axe which cost the Company thirty-seven and one half cents, cost the Indian thirty-seven and one-half dollars! While the Company bore testimony to the value of a six-gallon

copper kettle in the economy of a wigwam by demanding a profit thereon of \$196.00. It cost them \$4.00 and they sold it for \$200.00. For a plain blanket they charged \$125.00 and for a striped one \$150.00. The price of a coat was \$150.00, that of a pair of trousers \$112.50, while a cotton shirt could be had any day for \$37.50, a cotton handkerchief for \$12.50, six yards of gartering for the same, a four-penny mirror for the same, and a dozen brass finger-rings for \$25.50, thus making it possible for an aspiring buck to play the dude in his neighbourhood for the trifling cost of \$375.00. How many a vain sigh for such a possibility do the streets of Winnipeg echo.

A prominent writer on historical subjects, in making out a case for the Hudson's Bay Company as against the North West Company, some years ago, made the statement that the former company was careful to "foster civilizing influences". The writer was careful not to particularize, and we are left in the dark as to what these influences were and how they were fostered. And only now we begin to think we do partly understand his meaning. But all that writer's special pleading is tame compared with this item in our tariff: one pint rum (watered), price one beaver,—which in fox skins would be \$12.50. Such a price for a pint of rum speaks volumes for the fatherly regard with



which they looked on the untutored savage; while that word "watered" almost waters our eyes as we read it. We are reminded of the complaint of a certain Indian published in the *Colonial Intelligencer* to the effect that a certain number of lynx skins had been taken from him by the Company's agent at the mouth of the Red River for a trifling quantity of liquor "so weak that it did not go to his head". That same Indian has for many years, from the happy hunting grounds, looked with more favourable regard, doubtless, on the Christian motives which dictated the action of which he complained; for on a visit to Lower Fort Garry at a later date he got rum more to his liking with the result that he was frozen to death on his return.

But the Company did not believe that as much civilizing virtue lay in an eight inch file as in a scalping knife; for while they only charged one beaver for the latter article, they asked two for the former. But they encouraged the civilized method of dressing the hair with a comb as at least equal to the savage method by placing that article at the same figure as the scalping knife. And they encouraged the aesthetic tastes of the fair sex by placing a pound of beads within the reach of all who could raise six beavers—\$48.75 in beaver skins, and in fox skins \$75.00.

Peace on Earth

I. In the Street.

"SACRÉ !"

That is what it sounded like. But it may have been something else, for it came through clenched teeth; clenched, likely enough, for the same reason that the speaker pulled his tattered coat so tightly about him. And yet, in truth, for Christmas eve in Manitoba it was far from cold. Merry parties, driving or walking, passed gay with laughter and chat. No one seemed to have a care, save the one aged pedestrian from whose lips the above exclamation came. And he, feeble and clad in rags, might easily have been supposed to have the whole street's allotment of care and suffering for his portion.

On one hand of the curving street lay the frozen Assiniboine; on the other rose the stately mansions of Winnipeg's wealthiest and most fashionable citizens. In summer when the listless river glanced between its fringing trees, dividing with the more cultured loveliness of the gardens the admiration of passers, this street was a paradise of

beauty and song; and even in winter its architectural splendour borrowed much from its wildwood associations.

The beggar had moved along slowly but without a pause till he came to one of the most costly residences on the street. There he paused and gazed on the home of wealth. He stood in the open gate as though about to enter. But one of those merry parties passing in, jostled him, and he turned away, and, muttering to himself, tottered on and disappeared.

Busy men returning from business, idle pleasure-seekers, all have left the street. The soft snow falls silently and fast, dulling the keen glitter of the electric lights, and mantling pavement and curb and lawn in purest white. For an hour the street will be empty of human life. Then will come a rush; some to places of amusement, some to worship, others to business; but in the meantime there is nothing in the street but the falling snow and silence and peace.

II. In a Mansion.

Mr. Verner and his family belonged, as the phrase is, to a church whose bells began to chime, whose organ to blow and whose choir to chant with mechanical precision, each Christmas eve,

on the first stroke of the midnight hour. They were musical and took an active part in the services; and no member contributed more liberally to its finances than Mr. Verner.

On the evening of which we write Mr. Verner and perhaps ten others were ranged about a grand organ singing over and over again an anthem in which the unpractised ear might detect few other words than "peace" and "good-will". They were practising for the grand midnight service.

In that brilliantly lighted mansion the singing of such a song might at any time have had the appearance of appropriateness and spontaneity—there where wealth had done all that was possible; where education and taste were in evidence on every hand. There, at least, were all the comfort and happiness and freedom from care that such can ensure. Of the many, many faces there was not one but glowed with pleasure—father and mother, sons and daughters and friends.

At length all were satisfied that further practice was needless. Then as she threw herself into an easy chair, the young lady who had presided at the organ said:

"Now, Uncle, the history of that ridiculous side entrance please. And mind, unless you can show some good reason for the existence of such

an architectural absurdity, I shall be tempted to set fire to it. Why, do you know, I am not so very tall, and yet I knocked my hat off in coming through it to-day. The doors are so low, one has to stoop to save one's head."

The entrance referred to was an absurdity indeed. It could as well have been called a wing. It lay off from the side of the mansion, and was in full view of the street in front—a log-cabin of the most primitive type. Its low walls were of logs chinked with clay. The roof was of like construction with an outer coating of thatch. In the first room, for the cabin had two, there was one small window in which a tightly-stretched parchment did service for glass. In one corner a fire-place, made of clay, rose through the roof. This room was a receptacle for toboggans, snow-shoes, skates, and all sorts of implements for outdoor sports. The second room had neither floor nor window and its entire furniture consisted of three boards laid on blocks so as to form a low bench about six feet long and less than half as wide. Mr Verner said in answer to the request of his niece:

"Yes, Lillian, I will gladly employ the time yet at our disposal in redeeming my promise to relieve your curiosity in regard to that side entrance,

by relating the story connected with it. The more gladly because all the circumstances of it have been brought to my mind within the last few days in a most distressing manner; so that the telling of it will, I expect, be something of a relief to myself."

III. The Tale.

It was in the summer of 1869 that I first set foot in what was shortly to become the Province of Manitoba. A young man with no very decided aversion to excitement and adventure, I considered my advent well-timed; for the feelings of distrust and dissatisfaction at the assumption of the government of the country by the Dominion authorities were even then taking the shape of open and armed resistance. Like many others, I looked upon the incipient rebellion as something of a joke. But my views underwent a radical change when, with almost the entire population of the village of Winnipeg, I found myself incarcerated in the prisons of Old Fort Garry.

How these prisoners were treated is pretty well known. The building in which I was confined, with perhaps twenty others, had never been intended for anything but the storage of furs and pemmican. It was littered with rubbish, and had

not been cleaned for ages. We were without beds or fire; and the snow drifted through the grated windows and rickety but strongly barred doors. Of course we wished to escape; but how to do so was the question which occupied our minds with little interruption for several weeks.

At last one night we succeeded in getting out of our prison, but in attempting to scale the wall we were discovered and all but a few taken. For myself, the immediate result of the attempt was a more secure, though at the same time, more comfortable prison. But my comfort was not an object with my captors, and to reduce it as much as possible I was shackled hand and foot, and informed that I was to be shot like a dog as soon as one of their number was sufficiently recovered to take part in the proceeding. When a few days later a huge halfbreed entered my room with head bandaged I concluded my span of life was about complete. I recognized in him a man whose son I had treated for consumption. For as you know I was something of a doctor in those days, and was accompanying the surveyors in that capacity. This boy, a lad of fourteen, was my first patient in the country, I believe. He was the last of several children, the others of whom had already

succumbed to the disease which he was just commencing. Fortunately I had got him in time and was enabled to restore him to health. But I built no hope on that. My experience with them thus far had not led me to look for gratitude or generosity in the make-up of a half-breed. I was not a little surprised, therefore, when he greeted me quite respectfully, and asked about my health with every appearance of friendliness. In return I inquired after his boy, and so the conversation went on easily enough for a time, without anything being said to relieve my anxiety as to the object of his visit. At length I asked why his head was bandaged. He shrugged his shoulders, and said with a smile, "Ah, Monsieur knows how I got that. If I had been in Monsieur's place I would have hit harder. Besides it has made me a captain, and I have charge of this prison now."

That was indeed the truth. Andrew Dubois, the man I had wounded, was my jailer. His friendliness continued. I saw him about every day, but nothing was ever said by him about the execution which I was awaiting in fear and trembling. On the contrary my shackles were removed and my room was kept clean and warm. This went on for perhaps a fortnight. One evening I heard voices in angry altercation not far from my room.

One I recognized as that of my jailer, the other I judged from what passed was that of the brutal coward who was the head of the rebel government. The quarrel was about the carrying out of a death sentence on some "Canadian dog". The last words I heard spoken were by André. They were these:

"You may do as you please to-morrow; you may shoot a dozen if you like, but I will have no hand in it. This is my last day in the Fort."

The next hour was perhaps the gloomiest in my life. I was in the midst of a dismal reverie, when the door opened and André Dubois entered. He brought with him a lighted candle and an iron bar. After locking the door he unwound from his waist a gaudy sash and took off a blue "capote" revealing a similar dress beneath. "Put these on", he said. Something in his tone and manner forbade questioning. I obeyed in silence; and while I did so, he produced a pair of moccasins, which he also directed me to wear. Then with the iron bar he pried off the fastenings of the window and wrenched the grating from its place. This he forced outward so that a man might have got through without much difficulty. But that was not his plan. He merely tossed the bar through the opening, and turning to me said: "Come;

we have both had enough of this." He drew the hood of his coat over his head, and directed me to do the same with mine. We were now clad exactly alike, in clothes worn almost exclusively by the natives, and never at all among the "new element". The disguise was good, though scarcely necessary; for when the outer door was locked behind us, we found ourselves in such a blinding storm of wind and snow as few people were likely to be abroad in. André took me by the arm and we proceeded direct to the gate, which opened to us without a challenge.

How long we stumbled and groped through the blizzard I cannot tell. Perhaps less than an hour. But to me, weakened by confinement and lack of proper food, and every hour expecting to be captured and shot, it seemed an age. At last, half dragged, half carried by André, I reached his home and entered for the first time that door, which you, my dear niece, are shocked to find was not built with a view of accommodating the hat of a Toronto belle. I passed into the inner room, which as you see, has neither window nor floor, which then had no other door than that through which I entered. That room as you see it to-day was for three months my home, dining-room,

bed-room, parlour. Call it a prison if you like, but it was at least one in which my life was safe.

Yet many were the anxious hours I had. For fully a month almost, daily visits were made from the Fort for the professed purpose of inducing André to return to his duties there, or to seek his advice on matters connected with the rebellion. From the first I could see that the real object of these visits was to obtain if possible, some clue to my whereabouts. Yet while they spoke of my mysterious disappearance and the desirability of my recapture, even going so far as to mention large rewards which awaited him who should discover my hiding-place, not one dared make a direct proposal, or, except in thought, connect him with my escape. That same mental force which made me obey him in executing that escape without even the idea of questioning, kept them from entering on what they felt to be forbidden ground.

At last, one day the "President" came. He was accompanied by several others, and as usual, was drunk, or nearly enough so to be bold. He was abusive and overbearing. He called André a deserter and a traitor at the very start, and charged him with aiding my escape. André endeavoured to evade that subject for a while; but

the "President" returned to it. He said it was known that André was hiding me, and dared him to deny it. Without waiting for answer he continued, "We will see what is beyond this door." As he spoke, I heard his heavy step approach my hiding-place. But André answered in a voice the first tones of which allayed my fears, "Monsieur Poltron, you are in my house. If you pass through any door without my invitation, it shall be because I fling you through it."

There was a brief scuffle, and I knew that Mr. President had been thrown from the cabin. To my surprise as well as relief, his friends followed him. That was the last visit we had from the Fort. Time will not permit me to tell one-half what came to my ears that weary winter. Suffice it to say that to me it was a time of uninterrupted suspense and anxiety. And as the weather grew milder towards spring, I gladly placed myself under André's guidance and made my way to Portage la Prairie, where safety and freedom could still be found.

When I next saw Winnipeg it was teeming with a new population. The rebel horde had been scattered, and Fort Garry was in possession of the Canadian militia. I visited André and found him despondent. He said but little on the subject, but





I could see that he was far from pleased at the end the rebellion had made. He predicted the extinction of his race on the Red River, and pointed to the valley of the Saskatchewan, with its wild herds, innumerable, as its only hope for the future. We were seated at the door of his cabin—that same side entrance—during this conversation; and looking on the lovely winding river, with its wild-wood beauty, so little marred as yet despite the long occupancy of the rude race which he represented, I could not but foresee an advantage for both in the change he referred to with such gloomy forecast. And I seized the opportunity to help him to a happier location, and to lay the foundation of my fortune as well, by negotiating there and then for the purchase of his place. The price I paid was small, but it left me without a dollar. And it was not until the last ten years that the fine residences you see along this street began to be built. The natural beauty of the situation attracted the wealthy of the city as I knew it must; and as you know, after many years of precarious struggle and speculation, we now reap the fruit of my foresight.

And now that you know what we owe to the cabin of André Dubois, do you think it any wonder that we preserve it as I first saw it?

As for André he made little use of what I gave him. He went west but returned at intervals and never failed to make known the fact by calling on me and spinning a doleful tale of hardships entailed on his people by the changed conditions. Civilization and enterprise marched westward at a pace he never counted on, surged over his new Eden and destroyed forever the hopes which had drawn him thither. Since the summer previous to the uprising in the West I had not seen him until, about a week ago, he tottered into my office, the picture of poverty and wretchedness. His age cannot be more than sixty years, yet he seemed every day of eighty. And, oh, the sorrowful tale! It made me sad to think of the depths he had fallen, from the man of firm and commanding will I had once known him, to the professional mendicant. He had just arrived, he said, from the West, accompanied by his son, the same whose life when a boy I had been instrumental in saving. He was sorry I had quit the practice of medicine. His son had received a bullet at the battle of Cut-Knife Hill, which he had carried ever since, because, although they were loyal—of course they were loyal!—the troops had destroyed, or carried away all their property, leaving them without the means

of paying for the necessary operation. They had walked almost the whole distance, and his son had hardly survived the journey, and was now dying, he believed. And now that I had quit medicine, he supposed he would have to die, as they had not a cent. It was a piteous tale, and lost nothing by the manner of its telling. He would have spoken all day, I believe, had I not given him some money and sent him away. The next day he returned with the same story; his son sick, starving, dying. I was too busy to hear so I gave him some more money. That kept him away till this afternoon, when he came again. I was putting on my overcoat to go to the bank when he entered. I felt in my pocket and found only a fifty-cent piece. I gave it, feeling that for him perhaps, less had been better. He staggered to a chair as he took it. He was not going to be put off with so little. But before he could resume his woeful recital I hurried away. When I returned he was gone; but on the seat he had occupied lay the silver I had given him. It had fallen through his tattered clothes, no doubt; so his next call will not be long delayed.

But we have little time to spare if we are to be in time for the service. It is but half an hour to midnight now.

IV. In the Snow.

A few minutes later all were again assembled, clad in silk and velvet and fur, ready to walk the few paces that lay between them and the gorgeous church, where they worshipped. Lillian proposed to go out by the side door, and the rest agreed. Electric lights were swinging from the rafters of the old cabin. In each room they paused and looked around. As they were going out, Mr. Verner said, "It is twenty years to-night since I first entered this room and learned, by memorable experience, from what desperate straits the hand of God can rescue those who love and serve Him."

He opened the door as he spoke, and Lillian, stooping extravagantly low, darted through, singing as she went, in clear, rich, joyous tones, "On the earth peace, in heaven good-will towards men."

The stars were out and a flood of moonlight streamed down on the new-fallen mantle of white that covered pavement and shrub and lawn; and covered something else, too, over which Lillian stumbled before she had well got through the door. Her singing stopped abruptly, and she uttered a cry of alarm, as turning she saw a man's hand move where her feet had been. There was a scene of excitement then! The snow was brushed

from the prostrate form, Mr. Verner bent close to the face, and exclaimed,

"On my life, André Dubois! Drunk of course!"

"What shall we do for him, Uncle?" asked Lillian.

"What can we do but send him to the lock-up? Yes, hurry along. Time is passing. I'll telephone the police, and be after you in a minute."

And so they did. And from down the Assiniboine and across the Red came tremblingly the first notes of the midnight chime of the bells of St. Boniface. Long ago familiar to the pauper's ear, that chime rang for him a message of peace unspeakable. It was the last sound he heard on earth.

V. In a Hovel.

And from every quarter of the city other chimes took up the strain. How joyously they rang! And choirs sang, and mighty organs pealed once more the old-new song of Peace.

* * * * *

Only a hovel—a deserted lime-shed on the flats. Yet even here it is. No wonder all the city sings of it. A policeman's lantern shows it to us. Those who sing and preach so loudly about

it know it, doubtless, well enough; let those who don't look here: On some straw and covered with a threadbare blanket, lies a human form. Across it the fine snow sifted through the chinks, lies in driftlets sharp and smooth. Can passion or pain be there? There, surely, is no unrest! The policeman turns down the blanket. On the bearded face is death's seal. On the breast lies a Northwest rebellion medal. There is nothing by which his identity may be learned. He must go to a nameless grave.

The following spring when the shed was put to its proper use, a plug of paper was pulled from a knot-hole. When smoothed out it revealed the following, which was signed by a priest and dated on the banks of the Saskatchewan: "This is to solicit the Christian charity of all to whom it may come, in behalf of the bearers, André Dubois and his son Louis. The latter having been grievously wounded while fighting for his country during the late rebellion, has ever since been unable to work, and is a burden, instead of a support to his infirm and aged father.

"Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me."

The Festive Season in the Olden Days

THE term "olden days" as we use it, seems a sorry misnomer—when we reflect that middle-aged men may speak from memory of the time to which it is applied; yet nowhere is the line between old and new more clearly drawn than here in Manitoba. The change from one to the other, if recent, was quick and marked. And even in the seventies it was recognized, and the cleavage line aptly pointed out, by at least one writer, in verses which though printed more than once, may we trust, bear insertion here:

WHAT WAS AND IS; AN OLD SETTLER'S IDEA

O for the times that some despise!
At least I liked them, me, whatever,
Before the transfer made us wise
Or politics had made us clever.

Then faith and friendship, hand in hand,
A kindly tale to all were telling,
From east to west throughout the land
Contentment reigned in every dwelling.

'Twas then we all in corduroys
Would travel to the church on Sunday
And listen to the good man's voice—
And do as he had said on Monday.

Our women too, both wife and maid,
Had lovely tresses for a bonnet.
A goodly shawl upon the head
Was all they ever put upon it.

Then gold was scarce, 'tis very true,
But then it was not much we wanted,
Our artificial wants were few,
And we were happy and contented.

But now, alas! the times are changed,
At least I think so, me, whatever,
And artificial wants are ranged
And piled in heaps along the river.

Our wives have thrown away the shawl,
And got instead a showy bonnet,
With many a costly falderall
Of feathers, silk and lace upon it.

Our men, despising corduroys,
In broadcloth grace the church on Sunday,
And then go home to criticise
And do as they've a mind on Monday.

Our good old faith's supplied with doubt,
And friendship killed by speculation,
And sweet content is driven out
And grumbling envy fills her station.

O for the times that some despise!
At least I liked them, me, whatever,
Before the transfer made us wise
Or politics had made us clever.

The "transfer" did it. The reign of the Hudson's Bay Company came to an end, and that of responsible self-government took its place. With the latter came a new population, which brought with it new industries, new institutions and new customs as well. And as this population outnumbered the old so the customs and usages of the latter went out before those of the former; this at least where the two populations have mingled to any extent, though in the more remote and least progressive of the old settlements the old customs still prevail.

But it is with the festive season and the manner in which it used to be observed that we have to do here. And perhaps nowhere is the difference between the new and the old more marked than in the matter of Christmas observances.

With us Christmas is the great day of the year and something special and extra must be done to mark it. We exchange gifts; newspapers issue Christmas numbers; the churches are decorated for it, and so are the markets; we dress trees for the children and, that they may not forget the day, cram their stomachs with harmful sweets and their minds with still more harmful myths, to put it mildly. All these are things of the present. In the old days Christmas was not over-observed, but neither was the day nor its significance forgotten. In the few churches that there were, appropriate services were held, that was all.

But New Year's Day! That was the day of all days in the year. With us that day is devoted to making calls and exchanging compliments. These things were also done in the olden time, but with certain peculiar features entirely unknown to-day. Then New Year's Day was a red letter day and it was looked forward to and prepared for days and weeks in advance. Two things were deemed essential to a proper observance of it. Plum pudding and rum. It was an unfortunate member of society who could not have these two things on New Year's Day, and no one who could have them did without. Then as now, there was an upper tendom in the land

wherein fashions were set. The Hudson's Bay Company's officers were royal entertainers, and none knew better how to "celebrate" when occasion required; and down through every stratum of society their methods were copied, of course. And so all strove—and with astonishing success—to provide something good to eat and something fiery to drink, to entertain their friends on New Year's Day. Those whose taste for the "ardent" was perennial and who lost no chance of indulging, provided accordingly; while such as never indulged at all still procured a quart or so to honour the day.

Even the Indians through the land, and their name was legion, remembered New Year's Day; none so well in fact; and long before sunrise were on the tramp, the men with their guns and the women and children with sacks or other receptacles in which to stow such gifts of food as might fall their way in a royal day's begging. It was the discharge of their "flint-locks" that usually aroused the slumberous white man on this particular morning. A visit from these people was always expected and prepared for at both farm-house and fort; and it was seldom indeed that they were turned away empty handed.

When a party of Indians came to a house they invariably discharged their guns before entering as

a compliment to those within. Another feature of their visit was that besides passing the compliments of the season and shaking hands all around they also insisted on kissing and being kissed. From this ordeal no one on whom they could lay hands was excepted, from the host and hostess down to the baby; the man-servant and the maid-servant and the stranger who was unfortunate enough to be within the gate not even escaping.

Any one who thinks he can take some fun out of New Year's Day, now, should just imagine if he can the comicality of the situation this custom was wont to produce. As may be supposed, few maidens were bold enough to dare 'an osculatory collision with an Ojibway brave, war-paint, feathers and all; and no more plentiful were the lads who could hold their ground before a wilderness of unwashed wrinkles and "wind-tossed waves of hair", plus unknown quantities, and minus, perhaps, an eye, a nose, or a lip. So when a party of Indians entered by the back door, a common sight was a party of youthful whites making a hurried exit from the front, while the parents bore the brunt of the onset and feasted their dusky friends in the kitchen. But it sometimes fell out that this youthful rout encountered a second party of Indians at the front door, most effectually

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cutting off retreat and making confusion worse confounded. The bucks saw the joke of course, and dropping for the nonce their proverbial stolidity—together with their guns and blankets—scrambled for kisses just like white men. That is, just like the white men of those days; for this custom of promiscuous kissing was one the Indian borrowed from his white brother and practised side by side with him. Calling on New Year's day, was even more in vogue then, among both French and English-speaking people, than it is now and the osculatory form of salutation was always a chief feature of it. Another feature peculiar to the time was that one did not confine his calling to his own circle of friends. Calling was the thing to be done on New Year's Day, and when a party of young men started out they called on everybody indiscriminately as long as the day lasted, or their locomotive powers withstood the effects of the good things made or provided. They shook hands with everybody, kissed the girls as a matter of course, accepted or refused the refreshments as they felt inclined, and so moved on from house to house.

The New Year's dinner and the big plum pudding were for the family and invited guests, but hospitality was of a free and open sort, and if

anyone dropped in while the meal was in progress, he was quickly provided with a seat thereat.

There were dancing parties, too, though these were not confined to the holiday season, where "hornpipes, jigs, strath-peys and reels put life and mettle in their heels". Or perhaps it would be nearer right to say that they put life and mettle into the dances. In the healthful, vigorous society of the time, physical exuberance required vents, "and lo! there was a time to dance," and dance they did, as nobody dances nowadays. The difference between the Red River jig and the Blue Danube waltz is the difference between the bonny buxom lass of those pristine "hoe-it-downs" and the limp and lackadaisical belle of city "functions", who also, thank goodness, is going out before the bicycle girl and the bloomer girl, and the girl who wants to vote, bless them!

The Wooing of An Indian Maid

THE scene was a weird one. The fire's light rising high, rolled back the gloomy curtains of the night, and glinted fitfully on birchen tepee and sluggish stream. It lit up the dusky faces of the savage throng, then sinking, the black wall advanced enfolding camp and stream; but only to sway and yield again before the capricious flame. From the woods across the river an owl questioned solemnly, while from the nearer darkness broke at times the cry of a prowling wolf.

The interest manifested was not born entirely of curiosity, nor yet of sympathy with either chief. The most vital interests of the Saulteau tribe were at stake. The chief, Robe Noire, knew well, when he hesitated in his choice of a son-in-law, that the friendship of the fierce Dacotahs depended on this choice. Disruption in his own nation, too, seemed imminent, should the fiery chief Eagle Wing, be denied the fairest daughter of the

tribe. It was for these reasons that he had spoken as he had.

"This is my child; she is beautiful, she is good; she is the daughter of a great chief; she is fit to be the wife of a great chief. But two ask for her. Both are my brothers, both are great warriors, both good hunters, and both offer many presents. How can I decide? Will the White Chief give words to his son?"

This question was addressed to the Frenchman who sat by, and the Frenchman answered:

"Both are great warriors and both offer many presents: might it not be well to let them gamble to-night and the Great Chief give his answer to-morrow."

"The White Chief has spoken well," answered Robe Noire, "I will speak to-morrow."

So wood was brought, fires lighted, and the contest began. Two robes were spread side by side. On each of these a rival squatted with a friend beside him, and drew over his knees the unoccupied portion of his robe. Lots were drawn to decide who should begin. The Sioux, Wild Horse, won. A bullet and a shell were given him. Taking one in each hand he thrust them beneath the robe. The Saulteau, Eagle Wing, threw a fox skin on the ground between them. The

Sioux and his friend began to sing, the latter beating vigorously on the tom-tom the while. The bullet and shell were shuffled about beneath the robe for a time then, drawing them forth, the Sioux laid his hands, closed, on the ground before him. Without hesitation the Saulteau pointed to the right hand of the Sioux. Bullet and shell and drum were tossed over amidst shouts of laughter from the onlookers. Then the Sioux laid down a skin and the same proceedings were gone through with sides reversed. The Sioux guessed correctly and Eagle Wing put another skin between them. And so the game went on till the Saulteau made a false guess and the stakes went over to the rival.

Amidst the laughter and taunts of the onlookers, the Saulteau laid down another stake, and the game began anew. With keener glance he watched the motions of the Sioux; yet not to these alone did he confine his attention, but strove to fix the ever shifting eye of his rival. It was not mere guessing, but a struggle close and fierce between two savage souls. Each sought less to gather from the movements of his opponent's hidden hands how often their contents were changed, than to read in some unconscious glance or gesture

the thought which would determine in which hand the bullet should remain.

So the game continued; neither chief for a time being the gainer. At times one would be a winner, then fortune would change and he would be as far behind. Midnight passed, and no change had taken place in the fortunes of the contestants. The drowsy savages began to drop away, one by one to their tents. There was little attraction in an even game. At last not even the drummers remained. Only the rival chiefs and one other—the Frenchman from the trading house. He still sat by watching with a lively interest the progress of the game, and replenishing the fire as occasion required.

But a change came. Eagle Wing seemed to get the mastery of the mind of the Sioux. As often as the latter withdrew his hands from beneath the robe, the Saulteau pointed to that which held the bullet. But when the Sioux guessed, it was otherwise. If he succeeded it was plainly the result of chance. And Eagle Wing, feeling his power, threw into his otherwise monotonous song all the tones of triumph, defiance and derision. Again and again and again the Wild Horse guessed falsely. And still the Saulteau sang in wild monotony,



with his whole body rocking and swaying, and with every motion of hands or head or eye keeping time to the rhythm of his incantation. The stars waned in the western sky, yet the game went on. But the end was near. Everything the Sioux had owned lay on the ground beside his rival, or was represented there by pawns. Horses, skins, arms, clothes, feathers, all had passed to the Saulteau; all but the robe on which the Wild Horse sat, and which was now the stake. With a scowl on his swarthy face the Sioux leaned forward, watching with every energy of mind and body each look and motion of his adversary. Eagle Wind rocked and swayed and sang, loudly with triumphant defiance in his voice—triumph over his almost vanquished foe; defiance of that foe's desperate struggle to follow his thoughts. Already his savage soul gloried in victory. Already he beheld the proud Sioux steal shamed and naked from the camp of the fair Snow Bird; his now, for who could bring to Robe Noire as many presents as were his to offer?

Presently Eagle Wing exposed his hands and waited: for a moment the Wild Horse paused; then he pointed slowly towards the left hand of the Saulteau. The hand opened and the shell was exposed. The Saulteau made a motion as if to

rise, but the Sioux said: "Once more" and flourishing a knife from his side he stuck it in the sod between them.

"Once more," the Saulteau growled and again he began to sing. Even more wildly exultant, more defiant was the voice of Eagle Wing as he rocked and swayed, while shuffling his hands beneath the robe, but his eye glanced steadily into that of the Sioux in a way not pleasant to see. The Sioux flinched not for that. With compressed lips, and nostrils dilated he watched the motions of his foe. He leaned forward; every nerve and fibre of his sinewy frame strained in the effort of his mind, while beads of perspiration stood on his forehead. At last the Saulteau uncovered his hands. Desperate and baffled the Sioux sat for a moment returning the glare of his enemy. Then slowly, without shifting his eyes, he pointed towards the Saulteau's left. It opened and again the shell was there!

The two savages leaned forward so that they might have clasped hands. They glared at each other in silence; but the Frenchman smiled as the light of savage triumph faded from the face of the successful chief before the dark scowl of hate that overspread the face of the Sioux. The eye of Eagle Wing seemed to cower, and his right

hand moved slowly backward. That of the Wild Horse, still pointing, was suspended above the knife he had just lost. Like a flash they sprang to their feet. It was only to fall as quickly. The knife of the Wild Horse was in the Salteau's heart and the tomahawk of Eagle Wing was in the brain of the Sioux.

And the Frenchman passed through the silent camp as the east flushed with the dawn—the dawn of the day that made him the husband of the daughter of Robe Noire, and gave to the reedy stream its name, *Rivière aux Morts*.

An Old-time School—A Reminiscence

Besides the schools that were regularly established and under the conduct of the several churches, there flourished from time to time in Assiniboia, seats of learning which owed their existence entirely to the philanthropy of private individuals. It is with no desire to furnish a handle for advocates of "separate" schools or to resuscitate that now defunct question that these institutions are mentioned here. But we believe the labourer to be worth some sort of hire and as the projectors of these schools derive not fortune from their labours, why, then, they should at all events have fame, so here goes for one of them at least

It was not on the exact site of the fine brick school that marks the center of the town of Selkirk, nor yet a hundred miles from it that the events of this chapter of educational history were enacted. The building was not pretentious, and fish hooks which depended from the rafters, and nets that

hung around the fence to dry, indicated the source of our pedagogue's livelihood.

We have no curriculum of the institution at hand, but we know that the opening-chapter of one text book ran in this way,

Q. Who made you?

A. God.

Q. Of what did God make you?

A. Dust

Q. What else did God make? etc.

We also know that pronouncing dictionaries had not yet come into use, a thing to be regretted in a land where English, French, Scotch, Ojibway, Cree, Irish and other barbarous races had united in a grand conspiracy to confound philology; where the same man who found the weather "cowld" spoke of the wind as "skaling" or "skalin"; where an ordinary well was a "wale" and the one without a bottom "hale" and where the great drawbacks to grain growing were "smoot" and "roosht".

But such books as were available were used industriously; and so often had Jacob, the star scholar and heir of our pedagogue, been put through the volume already quoted from, that he could run the answers off from first to last, quite independently of the questions. Indeed the only thing that bothered Jacob was to fit the questions that belonged to them.

One day a junior class was called up and the first question asked:

"Who made you?"

From head to foot it passed, but no answer was forthcoming. All stood with drooped heads, twiddling their thumbs and casting furtive and envious eyes at Jacob, where he sat all eagerness for the moment he knew was coming, when the question should be referred to him. Presently it came. "Jacob, my son, who made you?" queried the master; and Jacob fairly exploded,

"Doosht."

"Doosht!" roared the disappointed professor, "I'll doosht ye!" and grabbing his rod of correction, he made for the door, through which Jacob had already passed, seeking the woods.

But he forgot the fish-hooks before mentioned, which, dangling from the rafters at the end of three feet of cord, just reached the level of his face as he vaulted over the forms. In his haste he neglected to dodge them, and his chase ended even more abruptly than it began. It is not on record that Jacob ever got his well-merited dusting. But the summer vacation began right where that chase ended—the teacher having to tramp something like twenty miles to have a catfish hook removed from his nose by the only surgeon in the land.

A Courtship in Mudhole

CHAPTER I

"SAY, Jake! Where you gown, boay?"
"Aigh? Nowhere. But you, what you're doun there, Boay?"

"Me? Nawthin."

The first questioner, Bill, sat on the rail of his home-made jumper kicking his heels together and cracking his whip, with a look on his swart face which, in the lingo of the place, said, "I got the bulge on you this time, boay!" His pony, a "shaganappy" of undoubted descent, stood the incarnation of weariness-unto-death, with its eyes closed and its head drooped dejectedly, before an array of large capitals. These announced that the thing whereon they were painted, though it looked like a diminutive freight car on sleighs, was no other than an "art studio" wherein tin-types might be had for the low price of fifty cents. Since halting there the previous day, this "art studio" had been the subject of much wonder and speculation in

the place. No wonder then when his friend marched by on the other side of the way, without noticing either the studio or himself, Bill felt constrained to call to him. As he looked after Jake, he said to himself, "Gosh! Am got the bulge on you, boay, an' I gase you know it."

In the queer old parish of Mudhole, Bill and Jake represented two branches of the great Smith family. Another branch was represented by a damsel named Victoria—and thereby hangeth this tale.

Victoria, or Vic, as she was commonly called, was comely as damsels go in Mudhole, and as capricious as they go anywhere.

Jake's father was a fiddler by profession. For the better part of sixty years he had industriously applied himself to merit the title generally conceded him, of the champion fiddler of Mudhole. It was a sight to be remembered to see him at one of the dances frequent in the parish: a little man, coatless, dusky, black hair erect as a porcupine's quills, desperate earnestness in his face, kicking spasmodically with both feet as he drew from a cracked fiddle unwritten variations of "Money Musk" or "Jenny Dang the Weaver". For many a year his chief occupation had been to sit, in winter beside a chimney fire, and in summer on a projecting

end of one of the logs of which his house was built, sit and fiddle and kick. Twenty years earlier he had not only taught Jake to step to his fiddling, but also to fetch from a neighbouring house a bud of Mudhole maidenhood to dance with him. This was Victoria. And from these juvenile performances, Jake and Vic wandered away together in search of bird's nests and other objects whereon to develop the mischievous propensities within them. Often on these rambles they met with Bill.

As regards appearance and temperament, Jake and Bill were about as unlike as two people could well be, yet they had always been inseparable companions. Jake was the very personification of stolidity. His head was like a cannon ball in form and density. His movements were of the slowest, and so were his mental processes. He never had two ideas in his head at the same time; it took a long time to get one there, and a longer time to get it dislodged again. It was his father's ambition that Jake should become as famous a fiddler as he was. But such tunes as were popular in the place required for their performance a celerity of movement quite out of keeping with Jake's temperament. One tune known as "Rade Ruvver Jig", and which to Mudhole is what Auld Lang Syne and the National Anthem together are to the

rest of the Empire, he did, indeed succeed in mastering. At least he mastered it sufficiently to be able to get well under way, and then it seemed to master him. When Jake, yielding to the entreaties of his father and the flatteries of the "hoays", set it once agoing, it became allegro run wild. It took possession of him like a thousand devils; it doubled him over the fiddle and made his fingers, feet, and elbow fly as they did at no other time, quicker, quicker and quicker, till the utmost limit of speed was reached and Jake exhausted. Then rising he would give emphatic utterance to the oft-repeated declaration, "It'll be a loang time afore you get me at that dam fiddle again!"

Bill was of a slight and supple figure, alert and quick of movement. His face was thin and sharp, and his eyes restless. A perpetual smile completed a picture of foxy shrewdness.

Having said that Miss Victoria was as comely as any maiden in Mudhole it will not surprise the reader to learn that Jake and Bill had not yet reached manhood's estate when both began to show signs of a warmer attachment for the fair companion of their childish pranks. As years went by it became a matter of history that they were Victoria's lovers. A less easy matter to decide was which, if either, was to win the prize.

Bill had many things in his favour. Jake had but one: he, like the conqueror of Agincourt, "had not the gift to woo in other places". This gift Bill had, and he scrupled not to use it. Accustomed, ever since his earliest acquaintance with them, to get the advantage of both Jake and Victoria, on every occasion, he could not believe that she could long resist his matrimonial intentions, and by no stretch of imagination could he credit Jake with power to thwart them. This fancied invincibility was his one source of weakness. He toyed with the lady's affections, played the ardent lover till he was sure her heart was his, and till Jake was also sure; then he sought other fields. He courted first one then another of the Mudhole belles, until the attentions of the constant Jake appeared to be winning the reward they merited, then back would come the rover, with smooth words and wily excuses, but back to stay just long enough to make his position sure, and then to rove again.

For several years Bill had played at this game, till the time this story opens, when matters stood thus: Bill, recently returned to his first love, found her obdurate, while Jake still ploddingly prosecuted his unaggressive courtship, with a clear field before him and no apparent aversion on the

part of the lady. This state of things Bill set himself to reverse. But several months elapsed and brought no sign to bid him hope. Indeed Victoria seemed to grow fonder of Jake. For the first time in his life, Bill began to experience something like defeat. But it was not in his nature to despair—at least not where he had so often been successful before. He hoped in spite of discouragements, he practised all his arts, and he let no opportunity escape of forcing himself again into the lady's favour. His presence at the "art studio" marked the first step in that direction. Already he deemed himself successful. Hence it was his undoubted conviction that he voiced in those words, "I got the bulge on you now, boay."

And Jake might have felt that the remark was not without truth had he been able to distinguish, from his vantage point beyond the next turn of the road, that the lady who, a few minutes later, emerged from the studio and, all flushed and fluttering, presented for Bill's inspection a tin-type of her dusky charms, was no other than his loved Victoria.

Bill thought no more of his rival. He praised the tin-type and begged to be allowed to hold it so as to get a nearer view of it. This the lady would not grant. Then he tried to seize it, but

in a twinkling it was transferred to the mysterious depths of her dress pocket; then seating herself on an empty biscuit box in the jumper she demanded to be driven home.

But Bill coveted his neighbour's picture as he had never coveted anything before; so after driving some distance in silence, he opened the following conversation:

"Vickie!"

"What?"

"You're goan to gimmie that pictshur, aigh?"

"Nuh!"

"No-o?"

"Wale, I gase not!"

"An' what you think I brought you down here for?"

"B'cause you didn't want Jake to, I s'pose."

Here the conversation stopped for a moment. The road wound along the river's bank with ups and downs and curves in plenty. Following this road with a jumper swinging loosely at its heels was the one thing in the world capable of proving the existence of a nervous system in Bill's pony. That was being proved now. The sleigh had run against its heels and for a time the pony required all its master's attention. But presently the danger was past, and Bill looked around to find his companion

engrossed in the contemplation of her own reflected charms.

Her refusal to give him the picture, and her reference to Jake, did not lessen his desire to possess it. Even while steadying the pony over the dangerous road, it dawned on him that he had not so great a bulge on Jake after all, and in the same instant he decided that to get possession of that tin-type would be one great step in the right direction. That accomplished, he would drive Jake to despair, and do with him what he pleased. It must be got! And on looking round, there it was in full view and Vic oblivious of everything in the world. He made a grab for it. Again Vic was too quick for him; but as she was sitting on her pocket it was not so easily found, and before the picture had reached that inaccessible refuge, Bill had succeeded in grasping the hand that held it. Then there was a scuffle.

In his efforts to gain the coveted picture, Bill forgot all about the pony, which again broke into a run at the first slope in the road. It was an honest enough run, indulged in merely to keep himself comfortably in advance of the swinging jumper. Soon a place was reached where the road curved sharply along the brow of the bank. The jumper swung and instantly, Victoria, Bill, biscuit box

And all were rolling in one indistinguishable mass towards the river

Bill let go of everything and the very first time he came right side up, started after the vanishing pony

Victoria was so taken by surprise that for the moment, she forgot all about the precious tin-type. When at last she succeeded in gaining her feet, she found, to her horror, that her hand no longer held it. Had Bill got it? Or was it in the snow? She hoped it was in the snow, and at once began to search for it, but in vain. She scrambled up the bank a dozen times and scrambled down again, but no picture could be found. Bill must have it! she concluded; and seating herself on the biscuit box she burst into tears. But either tears were a luxury she was not partial to, or it occurred to her that the present was an occasion they were not equal to, for checking herself in the middle of a big sob, she jumped up, and shaking her fist in the direction Bill had gone, exclaimed, forgetful of possible passers:

"Bill, you're a mean doag! Jist like you to rob my pictshur! N'jist like you to run off an' leave me! But jist you wait, Mister Bill! O! uf I only got Jake to come!—"

"An' why didn't you, Vic?"

She wheeled about with a start, and found herself face to face with Jake.

Jake's question was not asked merely because of its aptness, his remarks were seldom made for that reason. He had overheard but little of Victoria's spirited apostrophe beyond Bill's name and the closing sentence. But having passed the "art studio" just far enough to get some object between himself and Bill, and there noted Bill's departure with some lady, he now instinctively connected his heart's idol standing in the snow, gesticulating and declaiming, with Bill's presence at the studio, and a shock went through him, which could have found voice in no better way than by the question why she had gone anywhere in Bill's company rather than his. Nothing in her conduct for months back would have led anyone to expect it, while everything in it had led him, at least, to expect the very opposite. And even one day earlier that question could not have sprung from such unfathomable perplexity of soul as it now did.

The night before there had been a party, or "boal", in honour of Jake, Bill, and a number of others, who were about to start for the village of Cordwood, some fifteen miles distant, to engage in wood-chopping. This was, without doubt, the affair of the season. There were more people at

it, men and women, boys and girls, than had been at any gathering of the kind during the winter; there was more pudding and tangle-foot, more beef and bunged eyes; and the music was declared by all present to be even better than usual. And at this "boal" Victoria had accepted all Jake's attentions, and refused Bill's. So surely Jake was justified in thinking that the goal of his happiness was at last assured. Then, too, his father seemed to notice her partiality towards his son and to show approval in the following manner.

After a quadrille, over which the fiddler had worked himself up to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, he was saluted with a perfect deluge of compliments.

"That's the baste chune I danced to for many a loang day!" said one.

"I tale you what! Peter, you're getting better and better at the fiddle the owlder you grow!" said another.

"Yase," answered Peter, "and you bate I can show you a shtape, too. Here Jake, take the fiddle, boay, an' give us Rade Ruvver Jig."

Jake did as requested, while his father took Victoria by the hand and led her, still panting from the quadrille, to the end of the room. At the first note of the lively jig, they started down the middle,

their hands clasped head high, till the other end was reached, then back to the center, where they separated, balanced, and danced like all possessed.

Jake had not known his father to dance for years, and so was not a little surprised to see him take the floor now; but so happy was he that it seemed the most natural thing in the world that everybody should feel like dancing, above all his father; and when Peter selected Victoria as his partner, the explanation was quite clear that his father had noticed her partiality for him, and wished to show his approval of her as a prospective daughter-in-law. That was Jake's interpretation, so little wonder that he played as perhaps even he had not played that jig before. But play as he might the couple on the floor kept pace with him, and the crowd around looked on in silent admiration. At last the lady's staying powers reached their limit, but not so Peter's. He kept it up alone, while his partner stood before him, gasping and fanning herself with her handkerchief. At last a cheer burst from the onlookers; Peter gave a kick, cracked his thumbs over his head, jumped a yard high, and came down with a bang that made the windows rattle. Then as the applause subsided he said:

"You bate, the ould man can hould his oun with the boays yet! P'raps al give you a boal at

my oun house afore loang, an' thane al show you something."

Victoria blushed and fanned faster than before, and Jake, interpreting this from his own standpoint, came also as near blushing as his complexion would allow.

"The ould man's glad she likes me, and Vic knows what he means, too", he thought; and to hide the rush of joy he felt, bent his head over the fiddle and drew unheard-of scales from its tortured soul.

While Jake was thus occupied, Bill seized the opportunity to ask Victoria if he might see her home. He urged that he had something to say to her but she put him off by saying that she did not want to hear it till morning; if he would call then she would listen and perhaps have something to say to him, too. This was rather cool comfort, but it was the first she had vouchsafed him for many a long day, so he was forced to stand aside and see her depart with Jake. Under the circumstances, however, the grain of comfort was not to be despised, and when, accepting it, he called on her next morning, it was to find she had in view the trip to the photographer's which we have seen end so disastrously.

The dance ended, Jake and Victoria crossed the frozen river and mounted its eastern bank just

as the winter sun rolled its wan disc above the horizon. A minute more and they would be at the door of Vic's home, and having trudged in silence beside her from the scene of the night's festivities, Jake in desperation, determined that the time had come when something must be said. But what to say? and how to say it? When the door was reached the silence was still unbroken, and Victoria made no sign of stopping before entering. In grim despair, Jake caught hold of her muffler and held her.

"Vickie!" he said with an inward surging which almost prevented him from hearing his own voice, "Vickie, what time will the wadin' be?"

"Aw, Jake, go home. They'll be hearin' you in the house."

This was shelving the question with a vengeance, but Jake simply held on to the muffler and continued, "Will it be whane I come back from Cordwood? Aigh, Vic?"

"P'raps—yase I gase so. Now go away."

"Gimme a kiss first, Vic."

"I think the least you might do is to take wan."

She turned towards him as she spoke, her eyes twinkling merrily over the edge of a muffler that hid the rest of her face. Practical Jake, not being in a joking vein, did not catch the meaning of her

glance, but let go the muffler, with a view to exposing a more kissable feature, when like a flash she was gone and the door was shut.

But Jake went home little less happy for the lack of the kiss. As he threw himself across his bed he said "Gosh! Uf I should have to wack to Cordwood, am goun to blow een fifty cents at the fottagrasser's to git my pictshur took for her."

His next remark was a snore. When he awoke, the afternoon was well begun. There was scarcely time to visit the photographer's but that had been decided on too definitely to be abandoned, so he set out, and tramped down the road with a heart as light as air, to find the entrance to the gallery blocked by Bill and his rig.

As soon as the way was clear, Jake got his picture, and turned joyfully homeward. He reached the scene of Bill's disaster just in time to catch the last of Victoria's spirited harangue. He understood, and the descent from joyous confidence to the depths of doubt and grim despair, was so great, so rapid, so unexpected, that he was stricken dumb and so might have remained, were it not for the lady's last exclamation, and his tortured feelings found vent in that one short question: "An' why didn't you, Vic?"

This was an appalling situation. Jake fairly groaned as he realized it. And the ominous way

the lady shook her fist while apostrophising his rival was but indifferent balm to his sorely stricken heart. Whatever the extent of the lady's trouble, it did not appeal to him at that moment. One awful truth loomed vast before his consciousness—Bill was in it again!

By too frequent experience he knew Bill for a schemer and a stayer—a schemer before everything, and proverbially lucky. In their boyhood if they plundered gardens together, and if their sins were visited upon them, Bill seldom bore an equal share of the visitation. They had stood shoulder to shoulder in many a boyish conflict with neighbouring germs of ruffianism, and if black eyes were the honours, he, Jake, invariably carried a double portion. In later years when they returned from a spell of harvesting or wood-chopping, and indulged in the usual "celebration", Bill could walk straighter, and carry a bigger load of tangle-foot than he. The "celebration" ended, Bill would have plenty of cash while he would be dead broke.

Small wonder, then, that there was just the hint of a whine in Jake's voice as he asked the question that brought Victoria to the right about, surprise on her face and the counter question on her tongue:

"An' where the world you come from, Jake?"

"From the fottagraffer's. I went an' got my pictshur took for you. Will you gimme yours?"

As he spoke he drew forth his picture, but Victoria did not even notice it. She merely answered:

"Do you think I would give a pictshur to a fullah what would let me go to the fottagraffer's alone, an' him goan anyway?"

"An' why didn't you take me? Why didn't you tale me you was agoun?"

"An' uf I had tould you? You havn't a hõrse an' I would have had to wack anyway."

Victoria was surprised by Jake's sudden appearance, but her faculties had been set on edge by her struggle with Bill, so she was at no disadvantage on that account. Her last remark was, of course, intended to convey the idea that her being in Bill's company was owing, simply, to the fact that he owned the horse and sleigh. The immediate effect, however, was to bring painfully to Jake's mind what a simpleton he had been, when yielding to the seductive wiles of Bill, he had less than a week before, surrendered the proprietorship of that picturesque chattel; and more painfully the fact, evinced by that and many a like transaction, of Bill's mental superiority and traits of general

get-there-iveness. He was as wretched as possible. He could frame no thought to utter and so stood gazing blankly at Victoria, while she as intently gazed at a hole she was scraping in the snow with a rather large, but highly ornamental moccasin. At length he broke the silence by ejaculating:

"Hale."

This same word in more cultured centres is commonly spelled with an "h" followed by a dash. What it stands for is said to be a specific for burdened souls. Doubtless it was to some slight extent a relief to Jake's. But as uttered by him, with something of a gasp and a great deal of a falling inflection, it indicated a decidedly bad situation, and an acknowledged inability to deal with it.

Victoria glanced furtively up the road as though expecting Bill's return. Jake noticed this, and in sheer desperation broke out with:

"But you're gown to change pictshurs, Vic?"

"Nuh!"

"But you'll take mine anyway, Vic?"

"Donno 'bout that."

"An' why not? I don't have no use for it."

"An' I don't."

"But I want yours, Vic."

"An' am wantin' it myself. Am off home."

"I gase al go too."

They started.

"Wale, but you'll take my pictshur anyway, Vic."

"Wale I s'pose, uf you want me to "

"Uf course I want you to. I got it took for you."

She took it.

"An' what youre gown to do with yours, Vic?"

"Donno, I tale you!"

"But you'll let me see it anyway?"

"Nuh. It's too ugly."

"It's uglier than you Vic?"

"What! you say am ugly?"

"Me? No, Vic. The fottagraffer couldn't make a pictshur as pretty as you, aigh?"

"Oh, my! how you fellas talk!"

"Did you let Bill see it, Vic?"

"Wish you wouldn't talk 'bout Bill."

"Why?"

"B'cause."

"'cause why, Vic?"

"Aw, nothin', I don't like um."

They were crossing the river now. They had not seen anything of Bill, though fragments of

his jumper at intervals along the way, bore testimony to the amount of energy latent in the unpromising carcass of a shaganappy. Only the steep river bank was between them and Victoria's home; and her statement that she did not like Bill was not enough, after all that had passed, to restore to Jake that state of confident happiness which he had known in the morning. His perplexity increased at every step, while his powers to grapple with the situation remained the same. As they gained the top of the bank Victoria came to his relief by asking:

"How loang you're gown to stop at Cordwood, Jake?"

"Donno, Vic 'Bout a month I gase. Would you like me to come back sooner?"

"Me? Aw—donno. The loanger you stop the more money you'll have."

"But the wadin', Vic—"

"Aw! Never mind 'bout that."

"But you'll be raidy, Vic, in case I come back sooner, aigh, Vickie?"

"P'r'aps al be raidy afore you come back, anyway. But you have no time for foolin' uf you're gown with the other fullas. You better put uf you don't want to get left. Gase you'll be gettin' left anyway."

By this time they had reached the door. The discussion of the matter so dear to his heart had, despite the lady's careless manner, brought back to Jake something of the same state of mind with which he had left her there in the morning. She had stated emphatically that she did not like Bill, and was apparently agreeable to an early marriage. No wonder that the tortures of the last hour were forgotten. The deepening gloom warned him that Victoria's fears as to his getting left were well-founded. But the same meteorological condition gave him also a hint of another sort. He had not forgotten how near he had come, even in the unblinking glare of the morning sun, to the realization of the sweetest dream he had ever dared to cherish. Another condition more favourable was the absence of the muffler which had played such an obstructive part in the performance in the morning. The desire for the coveted kiss was strong upon him, but how to go about it was the poser. Besides his failure in the morning warned him from trying again. And yet in some misty way, he had long held the belief that kisses were the regular medium of communication between love-laden souls. Another article of faith was, that kisses were even more appreciated by women than by men. So it

dawned on him that she might be even more anxious for a kiss than he was. He would see. They had stood for some minutes exactly where they had parted in the morning before Jake's courage reached the high water mark, and he began desperately:

"Vickie, afore I go 'way you'll gimme a-a-you'll gimme—your pictshur, Vic?"

He builded better than he knew. Had not the "Destiny that shapes our ends" just then taken hold of him and knocked his knees together, and otherwise wrenched his anatomy, so as to prevent him uttering that fatal word, he might perhaps have never known the thing for which it stands. For a moment Victoria stood irresolute before she replied:

"Wale I s'pose uf you don't get it you'll never go 'way. You'll not let any wan see it! an' don't be kissin' it—you'll spoil it."

As she spoke she handed over what Jake took to be the coveted prize. He gave no heed to the injunction that accompanied it, but clutched the tin-type as though his salvation depended on it; and without knowing how it happened, the next instant he had Victoria in his arms and was showering kisses on her face. Then the latch

clicked, and like a flash Jake was around the corner and on his homeward way.

The door opened and Victoria found herself confronted by Bill.

"Great Snakes! Vickie," he began. "You're only gettin' home now! I was goun back for you but the jumper is all smashed, an' then I couldn't find the horse for ever so long, and I thought you'd be home by the time I got um catched, so I come right over. I lost tane dollars oan that trip. But I'll not mind that uf I get your pictshur, Vic."

"Wale I suppose you wouldn't! An' you'll not ax me for it I gase! A fine pictshur it would be that I would give to the likes of you."

As she delivered this broadside of withering scorn she passed through the door and slammed it behind her in a way that convinced even the redoubtable Bill that the time was unpropitious, to say the least.

"Wale! dammit-tole!"

That was all the comment he offered on Victoria's emphatic conduct. It was short, but eloquent—for let no one think that so much black ink can express all the subtle possibilities of the Mudhole vernacular. Any attempt to translate it into dictionary English would be futile. It expressed chagrin, of course, as its dominant note,

but not unaccompanied by mild touches of other emotions. Immediate success was not a necessity to Bill's nature. Indeed, satisfaction, strange as it may seem, was not entirely absent. There are in all walks of life people whose keenest enjoyment is derived from the friction of their struggles. An easy life, or continued success, would pall upon them. From their efforts rather than from the results of their efforts do they derive satisfaction. To such, failure is seldom an unmixed disappointment, often leaving, as it does, the battle to be fought over again, thus giving opportunities for other efforts and other combinations. Of this class was Bill. So it was with more nonchalance than might have been expected, that he tossed his bush-whacker's kit over his shoulder and started for the house where dwelt Jake's father, and which was to be the starting point of himself and friends. As he hurried along, and before he had quite reached the gate, he almost ran against a man standing in the path. It was Jake.

Happy beyond all expression, delirious almost from the effects of those warm kisses, and the possession of his sweetheart's photograph, he had not dared to enter the house where he knew his friends awaited him. Let them wait! That picture he must see. So holding it so as to catch the

glimmer of the western sky, he vainly tried to draw from the somber sameness of the tints the graceful lines that were to be his solace during his exile at Cordwood. At last, giving over the attempt of a visual enjoyment, he pressed it to his lips. During this performance Bill came up.

"Hullo, Jake!"

"Hullo, Bill!"

"What's that you're down' boay?"

"Aw, I wis just takin' a chow."

"Gimme wan, too?"

"You bate your socks!"

And as Bill did not fail to notice, from another pocket than the one into which he had thrust that from which he had taken his own "chow" he drew forth a plug of tobacco and handed it over. Bill thrust it into his maw and brought it forth minus a good quarter. Yet even the exertion necessary for the performance of this feat was unable to force his eye from Jake's face, or quite dispel the smile of knowing incredulity with which he regarded Jake the while. As he returned the plug, Bill said: "You've got lots of tobacco, boay! Some in every pocket, aigh?"

"Gase we better put, or we'll be gettin' left."

So Jake answered, and proceeded to act as he suggested. Not having in his mouth the "chow"

he professed to have taken, he made haste to avoid further questioning. On entering the house they found the others waiting for them, and they started at once.

During the tramp to the station Bill was in a brown study. The belief that Victoria's acceptance of his escort to the gallery indicated an intention on her part to again receive him into favour, was rudely shaken. The "bulge" he thought he had on Jake had dwindled woefully in the last few hours and nothing had aided the dwindling process more than the performance Jake had described as "takin' a chow". He was sure that the picture that had been so disdainfully refused him had all the while been intended for Jake. And to think of all the trouble and loss he had been put to on account of it! It looked as if Victoria was playing with him. Well he would see about that. He writhed at the thought that his failure meant Jake's success. Jake, of all men! There were some to whom he might have yielded even such a prize, and still be able to hold up his head; but Jake could not be thought of. He wished he knew for certain if Jake really had the picture. If he had not the situation would not be so bad, but if he had—

well! He lost no time but proceeded to plan and to act on the instant.

No sooner were they seated in the car than he produced a goodly-sized bottle and passed it around. He was everybody's friend, but to Jake he stuck closer than a brother. He joked and laughed with the others, but he squeezed into Jake's seat and whispered in his ear jokes too good for the rest. He gave him the first "pull" at the bottle, and he gave him the last. He cheered and brightened the others, but he muddled Jake. And when Cordwood was reached he had the satisfaction of knowing that the picture that had been in Jake's pocket was now in his

The walk from the station to the lumber camp had the effect of bringing Jake's senses out of the cloud that Bill's good-fellowship had raised about them, and he remembered the treasure in his coat pocket. He felt for it, and lo! it was gone. He felt in every pocket, but the result was the same. He turned and looked towards the station as if he thought of seeking it in the car, but just then the engine's whistle came down the breeze, from the next station, and he entered the shanty with the others in one of those states of mind "better imagined than described".

After chatting an hour or so with the other woodcutters at the shanty, the friends from Mudhole proceeded to "rig their bunks and tumble in"

Jake had scarcely spoken a word since entering, and now sat sullenly by, leaving the arrangement of the bunks to his companions. When all was ready, he still sat, elbows on knees and head in hands, gazing fixedly at nothing.

Bill was jubilant. He rigged Jake's bunk, and then perching himself on the edge of his own, tried to pull off a pair of refractory shoe-packs. After several futile attempts he called:

"Jake, you sleepy-headed galoot! lemsee come and give us a pull with these shoes, boay."

Jake did not stir, so Bill resumed the struggle. At last off it came, and apparently the same effort that accomplished this, sent it flying straight at the head of his sullen rival. Jake gave his head a jerk back and brought his hands together just in time to catch the missile. There was a shout of laughter from all sides, and Jake made a motion as if to return the compliment, but Bill skipped into the upper bunk. Then Jake in a vacant sort of way, fell to investigating the construction of the shoe-pack. As he turned it leg downward, something dropped out. No one seemed to notice this but Jake. His eyes followed it, and there to

his surprise and joy, lay the picture of his beloved Victoria. He could scarcely believe his eyes. He put down the shoe and succeeded in securing the picture unobserved. His sense of relief was overwhelming; the shanty was too small for him, so without even waiting to put on his cap, out he went and walked down the road. Only one sentence did he utter, "That's just Bill every time!" On he walked till old Jack Frost brought him to the right about. His ears occupied his attention during his return. However, before entering he must see if the picture was indeed that of Victoria. By the light of the window he made sure that his eyes had not deceived him. He gazed on it, turned it over and over, then entered, rolled himself into his bunk and was soon in the land of oblivion.

Jake's exit gave Bill the first opportunity of gazing on the charms and graces of the picture he had so adroitly captured. He fished it forth, fondled it affectionately, and mentally apostrophised its supposed original:

"Yase, Vickie, you wouldn't gimme your pictshur, aigh? An' you think you are gettin' too smart for Bill, don't you? But hould on! You don't know who has your pictshur now. You think it's that pumpkin-topped galoot, I gase. An' p'r'aps you think it's that blame fool what's

goin' to marry you, but p'r'aps it's not just that same! Just wait!"

Rolling himself to the edge of the bunk he held the picture so as to catch the light. Then he gave utterance to such an emphatic exclamation that questions came from all sides as to what he had found in his bed. He answered that he had forgotten to remove one of his shoes. He jumped from the bed, pulled off the remaining shoe-pack, then opened the stove and tossed Jake's picture in—devoutly wishing it was Jake himself, or Victoria, he did not much care which.

Happy in the possession of Victoria's likeness, Jake never dreamed of the real way in which he had come by it. He had not detected the trick she had played on him, and of course could not know that her picture had accidentally found its way into Bill's shoe in the upset; so he came to the conclusion that Bill had purloined it from his pocket while on the train, hidden it there, and so forgotten it. Hence his relations with Bill became strained. He refused to bunk with him, and went as little in his company as possible. This Bill did not fail to interpret aright, while a certain buoyancy of deportment on Jake's part which no one but he could have detected, was a constant reminder of his own lack of success. So, for the first time in his life, Bill began to feel "cheap". It looked as

if defeat was inevitable—that the palm of victory would be with Jake. This was torture to his unyielding nature; the only panacea for which was action. But what to do, that was the question.

For a week he worried along making up for forced inaction by a vast amount of speculation; the result of all which was the adoption of the following plan: get to Mudhole and try what could be done there, then back to Cordwood and tell Jake such yarns as would settle him forever. He could always count on gulling Jake.

The evening on which he decided on this plan, the wages for the past six days had been paid. There was talk of better pay farther up the line. This Bill decided to make a pretext for going to the next station by the first train. From there he would return to Mudhole the next morning and no one be the wiser.

But Jake had also been planning. The frequent contemplation of the charms of his lady-love, which he was able to indulge in the solitude of the bush, while detrimentally affecting his financial prospects, had also the effect of engendering a yearning for Mudhole too great to be long resisted. His distrust of Bill, too, was fast growing into dislike. Day by day he was finding it more difficult to avoid Bill; and day by day Bill's effort to ingratiate himself with Jake became more persistent,

more seductive, and therefore, to him, more hateful. He felt in Bill's presence like the proverbial toad under the spell of a snake's eye—sick with distrust and fear, yet unable to break the spell and flee, till his whole mind became filled with the intense desire to be away from Cordwood—out of Bill's sight in the first place, and in Mudhole with Victoria, in the second. Moreover he believed he had but to go to Victoria and take her as his bride. What though his funds were low? What though he had not stayed a month? Had she not said she might be ready sooner even than he? And returning after a whole week's absence, and for that especial purpose, he could not believe she would have the heart to refuse an immediate union. But Bill must be kept in the dark. So he set his dense round head to plan, how, for once, he might circumvent his cunning rival. He could eat no supper for trying to think. For three good hours he sat and nursed his head with no other result than that his desire to get away became more and more intense. He was almost despairing when the east-bound train came to his relief, and suggested on the moment a capital plan. Now this was the very train by which Bill had decided to leave camp, and he was even then on the point of picking up his kit to depart, when Jake jumped

to his feet and said with such energy and abruptness as to astonish all who heard, himself not the least:

"Boays, am goin' up to the next station to see about thame better wages. 'M not back een a couple of days, come along and bring my things with you."

He picked up his axe and started. Bill was almost paralyzed with astonishment, yet he recovered sufficiently to say before Jake got through the door:

"Ole right Jake. 'M you don't come back, look out for us about Saturday."

But he could not hide his smile of satisfaction. The next morning when the west-bound train came along he was on the platform, waiting to take passage to Mudhole. On his face was a smile such as it had not worn since the day at the art-studio. The coast was clear. He had a fair field for the exercise of his powers. The eager anticipation of the conflict, and the victory he saw beyond it, made the motion of the train seem slow. He was on the platform of the car before it reached the station. He looked ahead, not figuratively merely, but in fact. and lo! on the horizon he deemed so clear, arose a cloud, not much bigger than a man's hand, the size of a man's head, forsooth. It protruded from the door of the station, and he had scarcely time to decide that it was a head ere the diminishing distance developed in it a

resemblance to the last head in the world that he wished, or expected to see. Incredulity had scarcely given place to certainty, when the train stopped, and he looked down in speechless astonishment into the face of his equally astonished and speechless rival.

When Jake left the cabin at Cordwood with the avowed intention of seeking better wages farther east, he boarded the train only to jump off on the other side, and dodge behind the long rows of piled wood which lay along the track. There he hid his axe and started westward. When the wood-piles were passed, he looked cautiously around, and finding no one in sight, took to the ties and continued his tramp. For fully five hours he kept it up, till he reached the station nearest Mudhole. It was then a couple of hours past midnight and he had a good three miles yet, and being about as tired as he cared to be, he decided to have a rest before going farther. Making his way into the shack which did duty for a station he built a fire and was soon so comfortable that he fell fast asleep and despite the rumble of the passing trains, so remained till the moment when Bill first saw his head protrude from the door.

"How did you come here, boay?" asked Bill in tones that betrayed all his surprise.

"I wacked," admitted the ingenuous Jake.

"An' what you come for anyway?"

"Nawthin'. But you?"

While exchanging these questions Bill's confidence began to return. The appearance of Jake on the scene where he had thought himself sole actor knocked his plans completely on the head. But the exchange of a dozen words sufficed to restore that sense of mental superiority which he always felt in Jake's presence. Still the plan was no longer tenable. He must deal first with Jake now instead of with Vic; at once, too, and with his eyes shut, so to speak. The situation was desperate! And he caught himself thinking, "It wouldn't be so bad if it was some other fullah, but that blame punkin-head!"

Just then Jake repeated his question: "But you boay, what you come for?"

And desperately he made answer, looking Jake steadily in the eye the while— "To get married, boay! What you think of that?"

Jake showed what he thought of it by stopping in his tracks and gasping, "But it's not to Vic, but?" and gazing at Bill with a look that begged for a negative reply.

Bill answered by the question nicely seasoned with surprise.

"An' who else d'you suppose it would be to? An' I'll want you for my baste man, Jake. You'll do that much for me, aigh, boay?"

"N-no-o", Jake answered slowly and with a husky voice. "Am gown back to Cordwood at wance."

At this juncture a team came along driven by an acquaintance, who asked them to get in and ride. Bill accepted the invitation with alacrity but Jake preferred walking and Bill was just as well pleased.

"The blamed galoot!" he thought, "al send him packin' back to Cordwood this very evening, an' Vickie won't see, no more of him this winter."

Arrived at the house where dwelt the object of his scheming, he knocked at the door, hoping that Victoria would open it. There was triumph in his manner as he waited, but a change came over him when the door opened and he was confronted, not by Victoria, but by the aged aunt in whose care she had been reared. She had never been kindly disposed towards him, rather seemed to favour Jake's cause. Now her face betokened the worst possible condition of a never too-placid temper.

"Good day, Granny," he began in his most affable and ingratiating manner.

"Good day," she replied in tones indicative of long studied wrath, and pungent with reproachful ire. "Good day!!! Wale uf its good enough for you its good enough for me, am sure! An'

where's that good-for nothing rubbitch, Jake, too? What's took um out there to Cordwood? An' what's kippun um there, I would like to know?"

"Aw, there's a girl out there what's kippun um there. The same what's—"

"Wale, my socks! but that's jist the lot uv ye. You're all a pack o' fools, you young fullahs. Not wan o' you knows ees mind. No wonder the gells take up wi' the ould mane!"

Bill, who did not see the point in all this, was getting impatient. Although he had dropped a fruitful seed in very good ground, he wished to see Victoria herself. He had a choice remark or two for her. Then, he must away and prevent a meeting between her and Jake. So he quietly asked if Victoria was at home.

"At home! Wale, I gase she is. Vickie's alwis at home where thase a chance o' makun a fool of herself! Jist like the rest o' you! The whole place is over at ould Peter's drinkin' whiskey an' dancin' like a lot o' schupid asses. 'M you want to see her go long over there; an' a lot o' good, I hope it'll do you."

Bill lost no more time in words. Neither did he lose any pondering those of Victoria's irate aunt. The danger that Jake might reach his father's first, and so spoil this well-begun game was too great. That mischance he barely averted;

for it so fell out that they reached the door at exactly the same moment.

Jake, when left by himself on the road, plodded along till an intervening curve prevented him being seen by Bill. Then he stopped—stood for a minute in the road as if debating whether to proceed, or to turn and tramp back to Cordwood—but presently, as if his legs were no longer able to support him, he dropped to his knees, bringing down as he did so, both hands with a whack on his thighs. No words could have more plainly said that he had given up, and hope was at an end. The sight of Bill's triumphant, free and buoyant manner was enough to remove any doubt he might have felt regarding his mere statement. But Bill's happy face could mean nothing else than that he had come to marry Vickie. Now to Jake wretchedness or joy could not be conceived of except in connection with Victoria. She was his world. Hence wretchedness, never-ending, stared him in the face. He could have vented all of life that now remained in one groan; to do so and have done with it would give him more joy than he would ever know again. But fate does not pander to such whims. His shins, moreover, were getting cold, so he scrambled to his feet and followed the direction Bill had taken.

He forgot all about the past; all about the picture which had for a week been the source of so much comfort and joy; forgot all about Victoria, even; Bill alone occupied his thoughts. And ever and again he gave vent to some such exclamation as "The sneekin' scoundril that ee is! O, uf it only wasn't Bill! an' thane to ax me to be ees baste man! O, uf it only wasn't Bill I wouldn't care shucks!"

But evidently it was Bill; and as if to insist on it there he was in very fact. They met, as already stated, at the door of Jake's home. From within could be heard the sounds of fiddling and dancing. Bill, not wishing to lose the slightest advantage, opened the door, remarking as he did so: "Say boay, there's a high ould time oan here!"

The one room which the house contained had in it already more people than enough. The manhood of Mudhole was there in force, of all ages from twelve to sixty. Its beauty was not so strongly represented. Still, on a plank which reached across the room, ten or a dozen of the gentler sex were seated. Flanking this row was Peter, lazily scraping a waltz, while a solitary couple danced to it in the few feet of clear space directly in front of him. It was evident that "the high ould time" was a day or two old at least; either

the atmosphere or the state of sobriety which prevailed could have proven that.

Before the door, as our friends entered, stood a circular group intently gazing at a stalwart Mudholer, its central figure, who as intently gazed up the sides of an inverted bottle. Of this group, Bill took as little notice as it did of him. Not so Jake. His stricken soul cried out for balm, and when that bottle caught his eye he knew the balm was there, and with already reviving energy cried out;

"Hale! Jarree, give us a pull."

This called the attention of the whole group to him.

"Yase, boays, Jake fusht," said the holder of the bottle. The rest agreed, and various words of encouragement and admiration were vouchsafed him, as he applied himself to the pulling process. As he passed the bottle on he caught sight of Victoria seated near his father, and, elbowing his way towards her, the victorious Bill. He, too, followed in the same direction. As Jake drew near, the old fellow stopped fiddling and jumping up said, "Hulloa, boay, are you cummed? I saint ward for you three days ago, but I s'pose you couldn't get it sooner. Now thane, take the fiddle an' see what sort of a chune you can play at your father's wadin."

"Wadin?" Jake, never having dreamed that his father might marry, was unable to grasp his meaning, so he grasped the fiddle and stared. But Bill, who had also caught the word, abandoned for the moment his designs on Victoria and asked:

"What! you don't say you're married, Peter?"

"Yase, boay, you bate! I tould you fullas afore you went away that I would show you something."

"An' where's the young wife? Who is it anyway?"

"This is her, to be sure!" said Peter, taking Victoria by the hand to begin the dance. "Now, Jake, give it to us boay."

Jake still stood grasping the fiddle, but he grasped the situation also, and turned his gaze on Bill. And Bill looked at Jake. And as they looked, a change came over either face. Strange to say, Bill began to look sheepish; and stranger still a gleam of triumphant humour crossed the stolid face of Jake as he asked:

"An' whane you're goan to get married, Bill?"

"Donno. But you, boay?" answered Bill.

But Jake had tucked the fiddle under his chin, and part of Bill's reply was lost in the wild music of the "Red River Jig".

Tommack

"YOU remember Tommack, of course?" was the question asked by my brother as he pulled up beside a roofless shack on the Duck Lake trail. "That was his home; and he lies under that mound over there, now—he and Agnes Jock, his wife."

Tommack! Well, did I remember him! A century could not efface the memory with which he is associated in my mind. The many rides on his knee that delighted my early childhood as he sat of nights by the roaring chimney fire in my father's large old-fashioned kitchen. Or on his broad back as he tramped to or from his work on the farm, in those seemingly far-off days, were sufficient assurance of remembrance if nothing else remained. But there is much else, and one of the very first things recalled to my memory by the mention of that name, was the sense of security that his presence in my boyhood's home gave to myself and the other youthful members of the family, when in the first months

of the seventies Riel's forces were prowling through the Red River Settlement with dark and bloody purpose. Well, too, did I recall the feeling of elation at Riel's certain overthrow when I saw Tommack march off to join the loyal force that rendezvoused at Kildonan Church—but did not fight. Also the day he shouldered his gun and volunteered for service in the "Fenian" scare.

A splendid specimen of the native race he was, over six feet tall, sinewy, athletic, and handsome; the brown hair, steely blue eyes, and sandy mustache derived from his Orcadian ancestry almost totally obscuring all trace of his Indian blood. Many a memory came and all bearing testimony to the brave and loyal subject, the sturdy, faithful friend, and the honest and trusty servant.

And Agnes Jock, his wife—her, too, I remembered. A dusky beauty then, in the years of young matronhood. Fine features, dusky olive cheeks through which a tint of red was seen, coal-black hair and eyes of soft and lustrous brown. Of course I remembered them, and at mention of their names memory ran riot in a boundless and pleasant, though long-untrodden, field.

And now they are dead!

"Poor Tommack!" my brother continued as we started away, "They say he died of consumption! I am no doctor, but I can tell you that what sent him to his grave was a complication of civilization and British Justice—the Western types of them twenty years ago.

You know that after the Duck Lake fight when the N.W.M.P. shut themselves in the celebrated Cordwood Fort at Prince Albert, they also sent out orders for all loyal subjects in the surrounding country to do likewise. This order was very promptly obeyed by every family in the district with the single exception of this one, Tommack and his wife. They, doubtless, would have obeyed also, but the woman was too ill to be moved—was in fact on what proved to be her death-bed. Perhaps in a time of less excitement she might have been moved, but now neighbours on all sides rushed pell-mell to the protecting "fort" taking what property they could and leaving the rest behind. Tommack believed the excitement would only last but a little spell and then people would come back to their farms. He and his sick wife took no flight. Had he not fought the Sioux in the old buffalo-hunting days, side by side with many of the very men who were in rebellion now? Had he not stood behind the

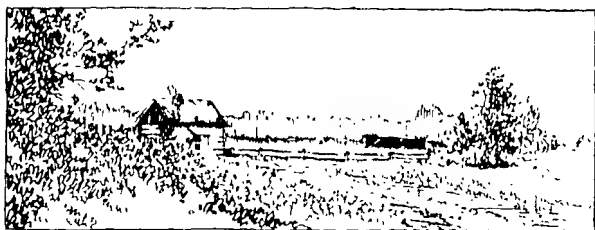
frail breast-work of carts and fought off the red tigers, while Agnes sat behind and loaded the guns as fast as he could discharge them? He could not feel fear! And if anything more than what has already been said is necessary to prove the same of Agnes, to Westerners it were sufficient to say she was the daughter of Jimmy Jock. To others the story of how her mother was won may show of what metal she was.



Jimmy Jock, the half-English chief of the Peigans, having lost his horse, and being alone in the land of the hostile Blackfeet, discovered that a chief with many feathers was on his trail. Then he set out to play the talent that had placed him at the head of the Peigans. For hours he dodged and played his enemy, till he found himself on the safe side of a huge boulder, with his adversary in easy range and quite unsuspecting on the other side. A quick and sure shot was all that was required now. He looked to his gun and horror! the flint was gone, and the deadly foe swiftly but silently and unseen, approaching his cover from the other. In consternation he lay and thought of the odds against him with nothing but his hunting-knife for a weapon. He could hear the slight rustle of the grass as the foe crept stealthily up to the boulder, doubtless as he came

scanning the hills above him for his lost quarry, certainly unsuspecting of his presence there. Then he broke the suspense by slowly raising on the muzzle of his gun his hat of many feathers till it rose above the sheltering stone; then quickly lowering it again. The rustling of grass beyond the stone was no longer heard, but the faintest click of a gunlock was, then all was still as death. The joy of war swept over him. He could have laughed for joy. But he left that for later. Again the hat rose slowly and moved around the side of the boulder. Stealthily, stealthily, till bang!! and it whirled through the air in a cloud of smoke, while the war-whoop of the Peigans rang out, and their chief, springing over the rock, flourished his knife over the foe and inquired what that worthy was willing to give in exchange for the privilege of wearing the crown of his head till the next time they met. Being alone, and in a hostile country, what he wanted was not scalps, but the best horse he could get his hands on. And finding his vanquisher in a negotiating mood the Blackfoot became immediately enamoured of the prowess of his foe, and offered him his daughter and all the horses he liked to take if he would but honour him by becoming his son-in-law. A bargain was struck

on the spot and both chiefs forthwith sought the Blackfoot camp where the new relationship was celebrated after the most approved style, and after the festivities were ended Jimmy Jock and Mrs. Jock, wended their way back to the Peigans' country, with horses and presents galore and a retinue of Blackfeet worthy of a king.



Love's Labour Lost—On the Prairie

IT was an autumn Sabbath, without one feature in its seemingly interminable length to appeal to the naturally sunny disposition of the fair martyr to the educational interests of the school district of Scrubland. Not one solitary person of a congenial sort—no one in the neighbourhood on whom she cared to call, and no one to call on her. No church. No sabbath-school. There were less than a dozen families in Scrubland, and save the people with whom she boarded, she had scarcely acquired a speaking acquaintance with

any. She boarded with an old Scotch couple, intelligent, and kindness itself, but even these admirable and comprehensive qualities did not reconcile her to her surroundings. They belonged to a sect calling themselves "The Christians" but were popularly known in Scrubland as Plymouth Rocks. And no sabbath passed without service being held there. Sometimes there was a small congregation, but often the old couple were alone to hold these curious services, which for the most part consisted of the singing of a number of hymns, reading aloud from The Flying Roll, and offering up long, mournful, explanatory, and curiously argumentative prayers.

The house was small, one room below, and two above, the partition merely of boards. Those taking part in the service were not singers by trade, and their efforts came up through the chinks that evening with an effect terrible to musical ears.

There was a look of desperation on the fair face of the teacher as she laid aside the book she had been trying to read and looked out on a landscape as drear as one might see. That afternoon she had walked a mile up the road and back. It was the only road in the district.

Straight it ran eastward to nothing, and westward to nothing, a waggon-trail strewn with boulders and bordered with scrub—leafless scrub. The trees, such as they were, stood up rigid against the dull sky and “wailed unshaken in the gusty air”. It was a depressing scene. Having spent most of her life in a city, her stay in Scrubland had been one of trying solitude, even while birds and flowers and sunshine remained. And now these were gone and nothing left but the scrub and the hardheads. Hardheads and scrub along the road, along the fences and in the fields scrub and hardheads. There was no sign of human life to be seen. No sound or sight to break the drear monotony.

No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds,
No -vember!

She was almost glad to be back in her room. She took up a volume whose pages had cheated many hours already. It was a “noble and joyous book”: a curious old tale of the days of chivalry; but the joy was passed and “dolour out of measure” was the burden of the story as she read that evening. And the soul-searing sounds began to rise through chink and knot-hole. There were four

or five voices, and each seemed bent on proving worthy of a place in that choir Dante heard sing:

"Sad once were we
In the sweet air made gladsome by the sun."

* * * * *

Now in these murky settlings we are sad."

It was terrible. She laid aside the book and looked out on the gloomy landscape. But there was no relief. She lit her lamp, less because the lateness of the hour demanded it than for the sake of its companionship. She took paper and pen to write a letter home. She put down the date and stopped. Her ideas refused to come under such conditions. For a while she sat trying to think what to begin with. At last she got to work; and this is what she wrote:

"Mr.——

Secretary-Treasurer,
Scrubland.

Dear Sir,—Owing to circumstances over which I have no control, I find myself obliged to resign my position as teacher in your school. I wish to leave at the beginning of the Christmas vacation. Yours truly,

Adeline D. Bonair."

This she sealed and addressed, then a sigh of intense relief escaped her. And memories of her home up west on the lightsome prairie, where friends were in plenty and everything else for which life is worth living, came to her, till as she sat there in the light of the lamp, and the light from within, too, of those pleasant thoughts, she looked lovely indeed. Her plain black dress accentuated the blond beauty of her face, in itself striking enough, with its fine oval outline, regular features and delicate carmine tints, grand forehead, expressive, large, blue eyes, and mouth with rosy lips and winsome smile. Her eyes twinkled with suppressed merriment at times as her mind ran over a train of circumstances and incidents which led back from the writing of the note above cited over a number of years. She wondered why she had asked for the position she was now resigning, and scarcely cared to own that it was to get away from the vapid but persistent attentions of a man who had grown up from boyhood with the belief in a proprietary right to her. They had been playmates in childhood, friends at school, where the boys and girls teased them and called them "lovers", later bigger boys and girls did the same, and the idea that they belonged to each other somehow

grew. She was willing to allow the tie of friendship if he were content with that. He was not aggressive in his wooing nor did he seek to enforce the right which he fancied he held. Others might pay her attention, and she might encourage them or not, that made no difference, he had first claim.

Few girls would have tolerated such a lover, but Miss Bonair never thought of him in the capacity of a lover at all, yet even a friend may become tiresome. She took to teaching, and when her parents moved to Manitoba she still remained, and during vacation made her home with her uncle.

On returning home after her first term, she found her reputed lover preparing to set up housekeeping, and gossip had it that she was to assist. Then a call from him convinced her that he had a place for her in his plans. When he called again he found she had departed for Manitoba.

This secured her only a short respite, for the next summer he came to settle in the vicinity of her new home, and took up the thread of his matrimonial plans exactly where she had snapped it less than a year before. It was getting exasperating! Some morning he would come over with the parson! She could not stand it, and she

did not care to flit back to Ontario, so despite the opposition of her parents and friends, she resolved to take up her old occupation of teaching, and had applied for the position she was now resigning.

All this and more passed through her mind till she came to the day on which she had started to Scrubland. Then a face rose clear and distinct in her memory, and she found herself contrasting it with that of her complacent lover, Mr. Solomon Shure. That day the train was crowded, and some one rose and offered her his seat, moved his "traps" and helped her to arrange hers, and when she looked up to thank him, he bowed and left the car. She had never seen him before yet his face persisted in keeping its place in her memory.

That same evening another teacher, Madeline Gruesome, sat in her room a dozen miles away, also writing. Her age was uncertain and her temper more so. In one school after another for a round baker's dozen of years she had wielded the birch, while each successive engagement seemed to be shorter than the last. From this present position she had been asked to resign. She was ugly in spirit, and correspondingly so in face, yet the letter she was writing was the answer to a proposal of marriage.

Some time before she had met a farmer from the western part of the province whom she had known in Ontario. He was a bachelor who had studied horses and cows more than he had studied women. But something about this time had emphasized his need of a helpmate, and promptly he borrowed of a neighbour the necessary materials and indited the proposal to which she was that evening penning a reply.

This was a sort of offer she had never before been called on to consider, but she wasted little time on pros and cons. This request from her trustees warned her that teaching was becoming a precarious means of livelihood; and if she had to wait as long for her second proposal as she had for this——! Her answer was an acceptance, coupled with the intimation that she would be free from her present engagement on the 23rd of the following month.

On the Sabbath preceding the 23rd of December, both ladies were seated in their respective rooms and both again writing. Except that winter had been ruling for a month or more, their environments had not changed. Adeline was writing to say that she would be home on the 23rd. Madeline sat with paper before her and pen in hand. There was no disturbing element visible or audible. The people were at church

and peace and quietness reigned. But a disturbing element there evidently was. She gave a sniff, laid down the pen and drew a letter from her pocket. She laid it on the table and smoothed out its folds—a double sheet of foolscap all scrawled and blotted. It was from Jonathan Wayback, whose offer of marriage she had accepted. Little attention had been paid by the writer to form, less to orthography, and none at all to punctuation. These are unimportant things, perhaps, where love is the subject of the story.

The writer set out by expressing pleasure at her willingness to hitch horses with him, and stated that he would be at the B—station on the C.P.R. to meet her on the evening of the 23rd, and that they would take a turn by the minister's and get buckled on their way home. Then he went on without pause or period through an extended inventory of all the live stock he had on hand—all the work of every sort; and then enlarged on the struggle he was constantly having "to keep things agoin' and no one to bear a hand". Presently he began to mingle sentiment, and then—right there—the whole thing got mixed.

"I don't no much about wimmin," he said about the middle of the third page, "but i no what a hustler your mother was an i no you be the lass for me to love whats the tendin' ov

13 cows and the feedin ov the pigs and things an 2 to do it deer i think im the lucky boy to git you but i allus no a good hoss its morn 5 ears that my hearts been thumpin my ribs when i see naburs betsy but i no your mother cud saw a cord ov wood quick'ern she cud split slivers for mornin fire but when you see her youl say shes the purtiest gal alive"— She gave a snort and crushed the paper between her hands. But presently she smoothed it out again. She punctuated it. She put in capitals. But no, there was no mistake. He only wanted her to help him with his work. He loved another woman and thought her pretty! She ground her teeth. She crushed the letter again and threw it on the floor. She rose to her feet and—gave it a kick! Fact! Then she paced the floor—just as the novels make them do. Then she took up a newspaper and looked it over; and finally she resumed her seat and her pen and wrote:

"Trustees Scrubland School,
Gentlemen,—

I wish to apply for the position of teacher in your school at the terms mentioned in your advertisement. I have had several years' experience. Yours truly,

Madeline Gruesome.

The day mentioned by Miss Bonair in her letter found her journeying homeward. In Winnipeg, where she had to change cars, she spent some time in seeing friends and shopping. When she reached the N.P. station, owing to a recent change in the time table, her train had already gone. While speaking to the agent a gentleman entered who was evidently looking for the same train. It was the same who had given her the seat on her trip to Scrubland. They recognized each other.

"Have you also missed your train?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied "and I was so anxious to get home."

"So am I," he said, "I have been away from home for nearly four months—ever since the day on which we travelled together last."

"Why, so have I."

"Indeed! Well we can go yet, if the C.P. train will serve you; we have time enough."

"I sometimes go that way. My home is six miles from the nearest station on that line; but as I wrote that I would be home to-night without fail, some one will meet me, no doubt."

They left the station, took a street car and were soon at the C.P.R. depot. There, having some time on their hands, they improved it by getting

acquainted. He introduced himself as Gerald O'Neil. The name was familiar. She had heard of him as a wealthy young Irishman who had been farming for some time about ten miles from her home. He was well and favourably known in that district. He was variously reputed to be the son of an Irish Lord, and the descendant of an Irish king; but all agreed that he was a king of good fellows on his own account, and that he was using his wealth wisely and to good purpose. Time passed quickly as they were speeding westward.

Mr. Bonair met the train by which his daughter had written that she would arrive. When he reached home without her he found awaiting their arrival Mr. Shure. He was greatly disappointed and at once suggested that she must be coming by the C.P.R. He proposed to go and see. But it was uncertain—improbable they thought—that she should come by that route; a storm was threatening too, in fact snow was falling thick and fast; besides, she was well acquainted at the station and could easily stay there over night. So they attempted to dissuade him from going. And all thought when he took his leave it was to go home. But he turned his horse in the opposite

direction, and said to himself as he applied the whip:

"What's the odds if it is a little blustery? I have everything in readiness now; and we may as well arrange things to-night and have matters settled. Just as well."

Some miles nearer the station, but approaching it by a different road, was Mr. Jonathan Wayback with his team and farm sleigh.

The hours went quickly by as the train rolled westward. So at least thought Mr. O'Neil and his fair companion. They chatted about everything in general and each thought the other delightful company.

He was so well-informed, his manners so perfect, his conversation so bright and witty. He was handsome, too, and that slight touch of the brogue that spiced his speech was perfectly irresistible, she thought.

And he thought her charming, was sure of it in fact, for there was no room for doubt. And when B—— was announced, he noticed with surprise that the afternoon was gone and the lamps already lighted in the cars.

"Ah! this is your station," he said, as she prepared to go, "the next is mine." He assisted

her from the car. When they reached the platform they noticed that a storm was raging. She said good-bye and thanked him, and the next instant Gerald O'Neil felt himself decidedly alone.

She saw no rigs about. Evidently no one was going to meet her. Yes; there was one just coming. But no, that could not be for her, it was a team and a big sleigh. It pulled up beside the station, and a voice came, muffled, from the depths of a snow-covered fur coat:

"Be's that you, 'Adeline?"

"Yes," she said, wondering whose the voice could be that addressed her so familiarly.

"Climb in then and let's be off. No tellin' what sort of a night we'll hev."

He shook the snow from the robes and tucked her down in the back of the sleigh; then he mounted the seat and urged his team in the direction of the minister's house, happy in the belief that in the back of his sleigh was the very woman who was made to feed his pigs and milk his cows. What comfort he must have derived from the thought that when he reached home after his long drive that night there would be two instead of one to do those necessary things. Occasionally he looked over his shoulder to launch a cheery

word through the whirling snow. But the elements were against the carrying on of a conversation at long range; so as Adeline did not catch those remarks she made no effort to reply. She was busy retravelling the road from Winnipeg to B——. Suddenly the sleigh stopped and she heard the driver say:

"Guess this 'ere's the place, though danged if I don't think we cum too fur."

"Yes, this is the place", she said, and she scrambled from the sleigh, ran to the door and entered.

Mr. Wayback hitched his team, and then started manfully towards the door, where he met Mr. Bonair coming to see who had been so kind as to drive his daughter home. That gentleman cordially invited him in. But once in the brilliantly lighted room, his face took on a look of blank bewilderment. Of course he did not recognize the beautiful girl, divested of hat and jacket, and all aglow from the frosty air, laughing and chatting, the center of a happy group, as the person he had brought, and to whom he expected to be married in a few minutes. But he did recognize that he had got into the wrong house. Turning to Mr. Bonair he said:

"Gosh! This haint the place. You haint the Minister?"

"No. You passed the minister's more than a mile down the road. But make yourself at home for you cannot go out again to-night."

"O, no, no! We must back to Minister's and get hitched and then hum. But whar's the gal as cum with me?"

"My daughter? Adeline? Why here she is. Do you not——"

Mr. Wayback turned his bewildered gaze for a moment on his late passenger, then suddenly and most emphatically he said:

"Je——hockey!!!"

And as suddenly and emphatically running his head into its furry receptacle, he made a dive for the door, and out. Mr. Bonair followed him and tried to persuade him not to venture out again in the storm. But he would not be persuaded.

"No thankee, sir, my gal is at that station somewheres. An' its six miles from here an' four back to the minister's an' git hitched, an' after that five miles to hum and thirteen cows to milk an' the hogs to feed, an'——"

The storm caught up the rest. Mr. Bonair sat late listening to its gusty music, and speculating

at times as to the success of the unknown lover across whose plans Adeline had so unwittingly run.

The storm increased every minute. The wind howled and shrieked and the house shook with the fury of the storm. Answering an impulse which she could neither explain nor resist, Adeline went to the window, raised the blinds, and placed a lamp there.

"Who knows," she said, "but some one lost in the storm may see the light."

Ten minutes later a knock came to the door. It was Gerald O'Neil! When he reached his station he hired a rig and started to drive home; but lost his way, and had wandered about for several hours, till quite near a light flashed through the driving snow. To his surprise he was welcomed by the lady in whose company he had journeyed from Winnipeg that afternoon.

The next morning was bright and mild. Although much snow had fallen, and drifts were numerous and deep, it had not grown cold. Before taking his leave Mr. O'Neil found himself alone in the sitting-room with Adeline. Mr. Bonair had been rallying him about a rumour which was current about the time he left home, to the effect that his journey to the old country

was being undertaken in search of a wife. Mr. O'Neil laughed heartily at the banter, and as her father went out he returned to Adeline, still laughing, and said:

"That rumour may not have been very far off the mark; but the old country does not hold all the charming ladies. And I found when I got there that the face of one I had met in Manitoba had for me more beauty than any other; so I returned as I went. I reached Winnipeg yesterday and again I met the lady; and last night fate brought me to her door! And I want to know if I may come again—if I may hope to win her love? May I—Adeline?"

He was laughing when he began, but the last words were uttered as only men speak them when fraught with intensest love. Her eyes were cast down—of course. She dared not look up. She was blushing like a rose. Yet she answered—she never knew how or what. And I don't. But when Gerald O'Neil took his leave they were affianced lovers.

As he made his way westward the road led close by a huge strawstack. At one side of it stood three horses apparently harnessed to rigs. Going to investigate he found them not much the worse for their night out. But there was no sign of their

owners. As he stood by trying to conjecture who they might be—or have been—suddenly the side of the stack began to sway, and from a cloud of straw and chaff and snow emerged Mr. Jonathan Wayback! A short search brought forth in a like manner the owner of the third horse. It was Mr. Solomon Shure!

After some general remarks about the weather, the different parties took their bearings and departed each his own way.

On the Trail of the P'lice

THEY were on the Coppersnake trail in the foothills of the Rockies. For an hour they toiled along a path, narrow and steep, dark with the shadows of lofty cliffs and wet with the spray of a cataract that roared below, till they reached a point where the stream came down in one leap of a hundred feet over the face of a mighty wall which seemed to bar all further way. Turning sharply against this wall they passed behind the falling waters and emerged beyond into a narrow chasm down which the sun streamed for an hour or so at mid-day, lighting up the falling waters and making the scene one of the grandest in the world. They followed this chasm for ~~some~~ distance and halted. Saddles and packs were removed, and the horses set to cropping such scant herbage as the place afforded.

One of the men industriously employed himself preparing dinner; while the other sat on a pack saddle, silent, his elbows resting on his knees, and both hands clasping at once his shaggy chin,

and short, unlighted pipe, while his eyes gazed fixedly and far into the falling waters.

The cook talked freely of the incidents of the journey, but the other made no reply, and apparently did not hear him until dinner was announced as ready. Then he said:

"Jack, boy, throw my share to the dog. I don't want anything to-day."

Jack fell to work, and for a time nothing was said. At length the other broke the silence by asking:

"Jack, hev ye ever heard tell of 'Forty-rod' Johnson?"

"Wal yes, I guess I hev. When I was down to Regina last winter I believe I did hear them p'lice fellers talk about a chap of that name. A good un he must, hev been at the free permit business. But I b'lieve they did him at last."

The questioner gazed another while into the gleaming waterfall, then shook the ashes from his pipe and said:

"Did him at last, eh! Well perhaps they did. And yet some of them may find they've been mistaken, too. A man don't always die when he's shot, Jack; and as to losing all the earnings of six years in about as many minutes, why I've been done worse than that, yes by fifty times, and not

by as respectable a man as you'll find in the p'lice either. But done or not—Forty-rod Johnson or 'Lucky' Strange, what does it matter? It's only a question between rope and lead. And it wont be rope I tell you! That's as sure as that I can never be what I was at the first!"

"What! ye don't say that you was Forty-rod Johnson?"

"I do though—if you don't mind keeping shut on it while I'm around. And that may not be long, Jack; for I tell you right now there's one of them cursed, sneaking p'lice on my trail—has been on it for two days. That's why we left that pack-train sleeping this morning, and that's why we're camping here now. I tell you there's a p'lice in that gang, and it's 'Forty-rod' Johnson he's after. And when a man gets on to your trail, the surest way to dodge him is to get on to his. And that's where I am now. We are three hours ahead of him now if he honestly stays with the packers. If he climbs by the short trail, as he's sure to do if he's thinking more of me than he is of his rickety old horse, we'll find his tracks at the head of the gulch, if we wait here for another hour.

"Yes, we must wait here an hour, Jack—it may be because I'm a fool, but I can't help telling

you something of why I am here at all. You ain't the lad to give a man away, I know, or I wouldn't do it. And I wouldn't anyway, but since we fell in with that gang, and that darned woman-faced sucker's been poking and prying around me, I'm all knocked to pieces. Somehow the last twelve years of my life just seems to come rolling down hill onto me. It beats me, Jack. 'Pon my soul, I feel like I could take the feller by the hand and make a chum of him. But I know he's a p'lice. You never saw face and hands like his in a pack-train. Just tell me if you ever saw the likes of them poking out of overalls before? He's a p'lice, that's sure. And there's something tells me that my plans are going to be crossed.

"When I go back over the crooked trail of the last twelve years, Jack, every camp I find along it tells me I've been a fool. I was in Winnipeg then; and there were very few men there at that time who were not fools. And those who were not were rascals. Most of them both. I thought about enough of myself then, for I had just married as fine a girl as ever walked—a girl without a fault except that she loved me well enough to take my name in exchange for all her perfection of character and accomplishments, as well as a fortune in hard cash, sufficient to keep us in ease

and luxury all our lives. There never was a man in the world better off. But people went crazy for land. Everybody began to buy, and prices went up and up. I lost my head, like the rest, and handed over my wife's fortune to the care of as slick and sweet a lawyer as ever was. In a year's time we hadn't enough left to buy a meal!

"Well, my wife was game. She took to working. As for me, I had never done a day's work in my life, and now I could not turn my hand to anything. I tried all sorts of jobs, but could do nothing at any. At last I started westward with a party of surveyors. I had heard how easily fortunes could be made in the west, and I hoped and believed I could restore the money my wife had placed in my hands, and which I had lost. I set about this in a way that was natural only to such a fool as I was, and I've kept on like that ever since. I forgot everything else—forgot even her wishes in the matter. I knocked about from one place to another, making what I could and saving it; but at the end of a year so little had I saved that I was almost in despair.

"Nothing I tried my hand at proved a success, till I took to whiskey-smuggling. Yes, I took to that! although I knew that rather than enjoy wealth so gained, she would work all her life on

bread and water. I knew it would break her heart if she ever learned that I was in such a business. But I was mad with disappointment; and the bare idea of defying authority seemed enough to determine me on trying the business. And there was money in it—lots of it. I toted the stuff into the wildest parts of the hills where the miners gave almost any price I cared to ask. I piled up the dust for the next three years. I worked harder than a pack-mule, and I lived like a miser. Everything I made I "cached". My wife's fortune was more than made up; and still I stayed. The p'lice got on to me and I worked only the harder and "cached" the more—tempting fate and laughing at it like a fool. There was nothing they wanted worse than to get a hand on 'Forty-rod' Johnson once. I knew that. And yet, on what I made up my mind was to be my last trip, I took my whole make along. My idea was to sell my whole outfit in the hills, and make my way over to the States, and so round to Winnipeg. I had money enough, more than I ever expected to have; and yet I must take two cargoes of stuff along to tempt fate. I believe the idea of leaving the cursed life I was in, and restoring to my wife the worthless husband I knew she mourned as lost, and the fortune she never cared for, except on my account, deprived me of what little sense I ever

had. That's how I came to let them catch me in such a trap as this. For this is exactly where it happened. I camped for dinner right where we are now. I had just got into my saddle for a start, when what should I see coming down the gulch but six p'lice. I turned and made for the fall, but before I could get my packers into a run, they were within range. I had my dust in my saddle bags, so I let the whiskey go and ran for it. As I slowed up to make the turn under the cliff at the fall, I saw the foremost p'lice pull his revolver. But he was too slow. I popped first and he tumbled. But five carbines rang out like one. My horse reared and in an instant I was over, horse and man in the rushing waterfall. It might have been minutes, or it might have been years after for anything I could tell, that I found myself with a bullet-hole through my leg, bruised and pounded, and nearer dead than alive, stranded on a bar half a mile below in the bottom of Flat Valley.

"Of course the P'lice thought they had made an end of 'Forty-rod' Johnson. And in a way they did, for I left the name in the river with my horse and gold, for I never toted a keg of the stuff after.

"The bar where I stranded was yellow with dust; and not a shovel had ever been in it. And sure enough no shovel of mine would ever have

troubled it, if an old miner had not happened along that very day. He was on the other side of the stream, but I made him hear. When he got over and saw the sand where I lay, he allowed I had the richest claim he had ever seen. I told him my fix, and offered him shares if he furnished a kit and saw me on my legs again.

"He accepted the offer and for two seasons we worked that bar, and every month we worked we took a fortune out of it. He called me 'Lucky' and I took up my last name, Strange, which I had never mentioned in these parts before. All those two years I never left camp. My partner brought in all the supplies. And though we were so near the trail we hardly ever saw a miner so I was safe from detection.

"Well, we had just got into quarters for our second winter when my partner fell sick and died. He left his pile to me and I had a fortune big enough for any man in his senses—so big I couldn't tell what it was worth. Then I took to gambling. Why didn't I go home then? Well Jack, I told you I was a born fool, and I guess that's why. But while I was laid 'up with that wounded leg, I had done some thinking too. I had to, you see; for I could do nothing else.

"I woke from a six years' nightmare, and saw that the wealth I had lost in the river, had been

bought with all that had ever made me fit to look in the face of the wife I had so shamefully left. All that time I had never written to her nor heard from her. While she was always in my mind, I had never formed one rational thought about her. I had been crazy, searching for wealth in paths that left me unfit ever to look upon her again—a whiskey-smuggler and a murderer. Had I succeeded in laying that fortune at her feet, with its history, she would have loathed and spurned it. As to me, though I deserve no better, there is no telling; for a woman's love is a strange thing.

"But I saw at last how unworthy of her I was. I realized the best service I could do her would be to hide my wretchedness and shame from her forever. You've heard the preachers talk about hell, Jack; well I could tell you more about it than they know, I guess. But that's no matter.

"I took to gambling. Four years I knocked about, washing in summer and gambling in winter; and I was 'Lucky' Strange all the time. Yes, Jack, on this very trail I have a cache that could buy that cursed wheedling lawyer, body and bones, and five hundred like him. Lord knows why I saved it. It was not for her. Long ago I gave up the idea of seeing her again. She might be dead, I thought. And I grew to think of her as dead.

ON THE TRAIL OF THE P'LICE 197

But now I know that she is alive. Yes and I know more than that.

"I am going to Banff, Jack; I may come back again and I may not—and it does not matter. If anything happens to me while we are together everything I have is yours.

"Saddle the nags, boy, I'm all broke up to-day. I know that woman-faced dude has no honest business with overalls and a pack train. He's on my track; and it's my own fault of course. A month ago I pulled one of them p'lice fellows out of a creek, where the blamed fool was going to make his bed—saved the life of the sucker! And though most people would allow there isn't much likeness between this face and the one I carried six years ago, that fellow tumbled to it, that's sure. Well, I'm going to Banff, and one p'lice won't stop me. After that, Lord knows. But Jack, what's that? P'lice, by thunder!"

As though from the heart of the falling waters two riders were seen to emerge. As they passed from the shade of the cliffs, the uniforms of the mounted police could be detected.

"Jack, we're a rifle shot ahead of them. Mount, boy and go at their own pace. If we don't run against that smooth-faced teamster, it's

all right. If we do; well, I've camped on his trail; and he'll find it out, too!

"And there he is, see! And another p'lice along! They're coming this way! Trapped, by thunder! And those devils behind are closing up! Well, no string for me, and—slow off, Jack! Good-bye."

He broke into a gallop. As he approached the two on the trail before him they halted. Instinctively the hand of the one in uniform went to his holsters.

Two flashes that seemed like one; and the woman-faced teamster, and the unkempt grizzly miner rolled together, dead. Stone dead! Shot through the heart, both! As their clothing was unfastened to see if anything might be done for them, from the miner's pocket fell a scrap, torn from a Winnipeg paper, which read: Mrs Johnson Strange, the talented vocalist so well known in church circles, leaves to-day to spend the summer at Banff.

Under the overall jacket of the woman-faced teamster, they found a woman's breast! Who could it be? None had seen her before that day but Jack, and he did not know. They found in her pocket some money, and strange coincidence—newspaper scraps, one, two. The first, yellow



JOHN PRINCE
Chief of St. Peter's Reserve and lineal descendant
of Peguis

with age, told how 'Forty-rod' Johnson had met his end at the hands of the mounted police, in a desperate fight in which one policeman was wounded. The other a new one, told how an officer of the same force had been rescued from drowning by a miner, known as 'Lucky' Strange. On the margins were written in delicate feminine hand, and over and over again:

"Johnson Strange, Johnson Strange."

Then Jack told what he knew. And they laid them together—left them beneath one mound of sand, united, as the sun drew over the cliffs and gloom again possessed the gulch.

With Lo, the Poor Indian in 1896

Treaty Payments
at St. Peter's, Brokenhead, and Fort Alexander.

HAVING spent our holidays taking in the annual treaty payments at the St. Peter's, Brokenhead and Fort Alexander reserves, here are a few notes taken by the way.

On reaching^g the schoolhouse at South St. Peter's, we found the agent, Mr. Muckle, assisted by Mr. Prieur, busily dispensing crisp dollar bills to the country's wards. Everything seemed to work smoothly; and the expeditiousness with which the payments are made is remarkable. Occasionally a hitch occurs, but with the assistance of the chief and councillors it is speedily unravelled. Sometimes a man will count as a member of his family a married daughter, whose annuity has already been drawn by her husband. This is generally done in perfect good faith, but it mixes matters

for a time. A more amusing cause of delay, however, and one that not infrequently occurs, is when an Indian is unable to give his name or gives one not to be found on the pay sheets. The agent then demands his ticket. If this is not forthcoming the difficulty remains. On the ticket is a number corresponding to one placed opposite the person's name on the books; when this name is found and read to him the Indian invariably recognizes it. The chief cause of this is the habit so common among missionaries of discarding a name borne by a pagan Indian when he becomes a convert, and giving him at baptism some such expressive and poetic one as John Smith or Peter Jones. The absurdity of this practice becomes apparent when one finds a family of three or four brothers, no two bearing the same surname. The inconvenience caused by it perhaps no one but the agent knows. But fortunately his knowledge of those under his care seems to be equal to any emergency. While the payments were being made, the chief and other members of the council were in constant attendance, and here we had a good opportunity of observing the grand inscrutability of the face of perhaps the finest living type of the aristocratic element so fast disappearing from

amongst our Indians. John Prince, a lineal descendant of Peguis, is a pure-blood Indian, and bears his charter of nobility in face and manner. In meeting him one feels that one meets a gentleman, and all who know him have only good to say of him.

After a stroll among the traders' tents, of which there were some twelve or fifteen, we brought up at the spacious and well-supplied refreshment booth of Mrs. Walker.

During the afternoon the grounds were crowded with visitors. Most of these were from Selkirk and vicinity, but there were also not a few from Winnipeg. Towards evening a dancing floor was laid down and "the beauty and the chivalry" of St. Peter's tripped it "on the light fantastic" and other kinds of toes till the stars grew pale in the morning sky. As the night was calm, a couple of candles, tied to poles, gave all the light that was required.

The next day there was a repetition of the first. The payments went on expeditiously, and by evening Mr. Muckle had finished his work, and was ready to start the following morning.

Embarking early on the 8th aboard the *Loon*, a trim two-masted boat owned by Duncan

Two-Hearts, an Indian of Fort Alexander, we ran before a fresh breeze to Trindle Chapel, a point about six miles down the river, where the next payment was made. From the boat we could see on either bank of the river repeated evidences of progress and even prosperity. Neat and comfortable houses all along, with churches, chapels and schools galore, make it difficult for the stranger to believe that he is passing through an Indian reserve. An object of particular interest is the Indian hospital, formerly the home of the late Archdeacon Cowley. The hospital is conducted by Dr. Roliston, under the auspices of the English Church Missionary society. There is no calculating the amount of good this institution may do. There is ample reason for its establishment and it deserves to be more widely known than it is. With a view to assisting the finances of the hospital, the Misses Roliston, assisted by Miss McKenzie of Mapleton, have at Trindle, as at South St. Peter's, a refreshment stand, where anything from a square meal to a glass of lemonade may be had at current rates. Owing to its philanthropic purposes no doubt, this stand seems to be the most popular on the grounds. Next in popularity here as elsewhere, came the dancing floors. There are no fewer than four and all well patronized.

This is the grand holiday season on the reserves. Everybody seems to leave his or her occupation to camp at the treaty ground, and stay there as long as the payment lasts. Of course the young folks must have some amusement, and dancing, football, baseball and lacrosse are resorted to. These are all innocent amusements, and heartily enjoyed by those who take part in them, as well as by many who do not. It is a matter of great credit to the Indians, as well as to the officials connected with them, that during six days of holiday making here and at South St. Peter's, though so near to Selkirk, there was not one case of drunkenness, disorder or improper conduct of any kind to be seen.



LAUGHING JOE

One of the events here was the marriage of a well known resident of Winnipeg, "Laughing Joe" to a lady whose name we did not learn. On their return from church the whole community turned out to welcome them. Everybody who had a gun discharged it, and those who had none cheered. Joe was not the least excited over the unusual event, but made his way to the agent's tent and drew ten dollars with all convenient speed; which

caused some to remark that it was not only in Fifth Avenue weddings that love played a secondary part.

By noon of the 9th Mr. Muckle had completed his business and was on his way to Brokenhead followed by the boats of the traders. The wind was light and our progress down the river slow. When night came on we pushed into a creek about a mile from the lake and camped. The banks of the creek were about a foot above the water and there was just room for our tents between the creek on one hand and the marsh on the other. What dry land was not occupied by our camp was covered by catfish heads and backbones in all stages of odoriferousness. This interfered but little, strange to say, with either supper or sleep; but the latter was somewhat interfered with by the antics of fifteen or twenty live catfish strung on a cord and tied along the shore beside our tent. This is a way the Indians have of keeping them till a boat load is procured, when they are taken to Selkirk and sold. The lot in question whiled the night away by trying which could flop the hardest and make the most noise. They seemed to take lots of fun out of it, and out of the belief that they were annoying us, and when we looked out in the morning there they were, every one looking at us with a grin on him

as wide as a spade; with due respect for a fish that could be humorous under such conditions we called the stream Catfish Creek and continued our voyage.

The morning was calm and we were obliged to row most of the way to Brokenhead River, where we arrived in the afternoon.

At the treaty grounds we found most of the traders whom we had left behind at St. Peter's already set up for business, having secured the services of a tug to tow them out. But a greater surprise was to find Miss McKenzie and the Misses Roliston busily catering to the wants of the hungry public. These enterprising ladies had made a short cut through the marsh, following a channel available only for small boats. By this route much time can be saved, and Lake Winnipeg avoided altogether.

The first proceeding in connection with the treaty was the election of four councillors. Eight nominations were made, and a poll was immediately opened. As each voter presented himself his name was taken down and he was asked for whom he wished to vote. Looking around for a while he would point with his finger towards a figure squatting on the grass and say "Ugh". This he would do four times and his ticket was voted. We did not hear of any cases of personation and

bribery, and to all appearances it was a strictly honest election. There were no protests entered and no recounts demanded; and the successful candidates were at once invested by Mr. Muckle with their robes of office.

Near by the treaty grounds stands the parsonage of the Church of England Mission, which is under the charge of Rev. Mr. Coates. We had the pleasure of meeting in this gentleman an old acquaintance. The church and school we did not see, as they are some miles farther up the river. Indeed there are very few houses just at this point. During our first evening here Mr. Coates held an open air prayer meeting, which was largely attended by the Indians. The whole service was in the Indian language, and the sermon, which was an eloquent one, was preached by Chief Asham, of St. Peter's.

On the second evening of our stay we attended a service of quite another sort—a dog feast, viz. : towards evening the fatted dog was killed, the hair removed by singeing and the meat thrown into a pot and boiled. While this was being done, a circular enclosure was made by setting up poplar saplings with the leaves on. On one side an opening was left, and in the centre a stake set up. Around this stake several men seated themselves and began to drum and sing. Others, dressed fantastically

for the occasion, and jangling strings of bells, danced and capered around, while still others squatted around the wall of the enclosure. Occasionally the drumming and dancing would stop when a lanky Indian, wearing a Christy stiff hat, plentifully bedecked with feathers, would get up and make a speech. At each pause in the oration a most emphatic bang on the drum, and an equally emphatic "Ugh!" signified the approval of the auditors. After this performance was repeated several times, the dog was brought in, and all began to feed. The stuff was handed about in tin pans, into which the participants thrust their hands one after another till all the dog was gone. Then the pan went around again, each in turn taking a drink of the liquor. Then came some more drumming and dancing, and a presentation of gifts to the provider of the feast. Then more dog and soup, and so on as long as it lasted.

It is but justice to the Mission here to state that very few of the resident Indians participated in this affair. The promoters of it came almost entirely from St. Boniface and Winnipeg. These city Indians are, as a rule, the worst in every respect, and the most hopelessly heathen that the missionaries have to deal with. Their annual visits to their people, and those of traders, and

others as well, who show no regard for the Sabbath or for Christianity, are the two worst influences missionaries have to contend against.

We arrived at Fort Alexander on the morning of the 14th, and left on the morning of the 19th, thus having ample time to see the sights of this place and vicinity. There are some unique features about this settlement. One is the entire absence of roads. Footpaths there are, leading along the river banks, in following which one can get a shower bath gratis any morning by simply shaking the over-hanging willows. One of the surprises of the place was to see a man hauling goods from the fort to the treaty grounds with a team and sleigh! Not because there was snow on the ground by any means, but simply because there isn't a wheeled vehicle in the place. The sleigh was of a primitive type, too, being made of two oak planks, 2x10 and eight bars mortised through. In short, it was an old time Red River sled of the same date as the famous cart, and, like it, absolutely without a scrap of iron in its make-up. We did not investigate whether the absence of wheels was due to the lack of roads, or the lack of roads due to the absence of wheels. Likely enough both are absent because they are

not required. The settlement, which begins at the mouth of the river, and extends some fifteen miles up, lies entirely along its banks, so that its waters form the most convenient highway possible for summer travel; and in winter most of the traffic of the district is done by means of dog trains.

In ascending the river, the first object of interest met with is the Catholic mission buildings, which include a church, school and parsonage. These stand about four miles up the river, on the right bank. Most of the settlement is on this bank, as is also the fort and the Church of England mission. A short distance from the Roman Catholic mission is Fort Alexander itself. Once a place of much importance, and a witness of ~~some~~ of the most thrilling events in the wild history of the early days, one feels with genuine regret that the glory has departed from it. Leaving out of account a new and handsome residence, the "fort" consists of three buildings, which show decay on every board. There is no enclosing wall. During our stay the business of the place was transferred to the treaty grounds, and perhaps to that was due some of the air of desertion and neglect so noticeable. Repairing and renewing of buildings seem to have been discontinued years ago. One would suspect that the place had outlived its usefulness. And

at the present moment its continuance may be looked upon as problematical. Mr. Flett, who has been in charge for the last ten years, after almost fifty years' connection with the Hudson's Bay Company is about to retire to spend the rest of his days in well-earned leisure at his new and beautiful home near Selkirk. And we hear the question asked by more than one, "Will Fort Alexander survive?"

What makes Fort Alexander worth visiting now, more than anything else, is to be found in the "residence"—the genuine and genial hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Flett and their fine family of sons and daughters. Four miles higher up is the Church of England mission, at present in charge of the Rev. Edward Thomas. Here thrift and progress are strongly in evidence. The parsonage is large and substantial, and is the work of Mr. Thomas's own hands before taking orders. The church is a neat and tasteful building, well furnished and painted without though not yet so within. The pulpit, which is a splendid piece of work, and such as might grace a city church, was made by the boys of Rupert's Land Industrial School. The garden, fields and fences here are all up to date, and here, too, under Mr. Thomas's

direction a creditable start has been made at road-making.

Many of the Indians on the reserves have neat and comfortable houses and well cultivated gardens. When the reserve line is passed there begins a French settlement which continues for some miles along the river bank. These settlers are mostly from Quebec and seem to be the right sort for the place. They are getting up comfortable buildings and clearing the land. So far they have had to confine themselves to such crops as beans, of which, last year, they are said to have sold hundreds of dollars' worth.

While we were "doing" the place the "money chief" was distributing his dollar bills, which, of course, a dozen traders were as industriously raking in. The payment was finished on the 16th. The next day was devoted to the adjustment of certain matters of interest to the Indians.

After breakfast the chief and council assembled before Mr. Muckle's tent and began a palaver which lasted well into the night. The first question discussed was whether pigs should be allowed to run at large or not. Some urged that pigs running at large destroyed their gardens, while an opposing faction pointed out that it was easier to enclose a



garden than to enclose a koo-koosh. After they had chewed the rag for several hours, the agent decided to take a plebiscite. This was done. The leaders of the opposing parties took position and endeavoured to rally their supporters about them by calling "Oota! Oota! Oota!" (here, here, here). When heads were counted it was found that two-thirds were in favour of shutting up the villainous "koo-koosh". To this decision the council will give effect by by-law. Then another question was taken up, and another, and another. When the palaver ended it was found that Mr. Muckle was not talked to death, quite; to prove which he repeated verbatim and with due emphasis, though with evident effort, the well known speech of the governor of Carolina. His friends were glad to hear this unexpected proof of vitality, and received it with applause. The next day he devoted to a tour of inspection through the reserve.

This day, our cook otherwise employed, it devolved on his assistant to provide dinner. But when the usual time for that meal arrived all that was forthcoming was providkingly solicitous enquiries as to what the different members of the party would like. His conduct was explained, however, when Mr. Flett came over from his tent and announced that dinner was waiting. Then we

discovered that, through the assistant cook, we had all been invited to dine, but had not been advised of the fact till that functionary had taken all the amusement he could out of the situation. We now accepted the invitation instanter, and pulling our trousers into the best shape for squatting, marched over to Mr. Flett's quarters. But arrived there, lo! Chairs and a table with snowy linen and flowers—a regular city table—and presiding over it, Miss Flett, a hostess fitted to do such honours anywhere. This day closed with a dance at the fort, where Mr. Flett very kindly placed a building at the disposal of those inclined for such amusement. To any one who wants to see the Red River jig danced to perfection, we would say go to Fort Alexander. They can do it better there, we believe, than anywhere else, and certainly "twice as more".

The proceedings of the 18th were opened by an Indian applying for \$5 on account of a brand new papoose born the previous night. He got the money and departed as happy as could be expected under the unfortunate circumstance that the papoose wasn't twins.

The last event of the day was an impromptu war dance, got up by some lively young bucks. Four drummers seated themselves and began to



drum and sing. Two squaws joined them, and added their wild shrill voices to the guttural notes of the braves. Soon an admiring ring was formed about them, inside of which, one after another, the bucks began to dance. Everybody seemed to be in for fun, and it was soon apparent that, under cover of night, there were some bucks not entitled to treaty money taking part. Some of these acquired the peculiar step of the dance in perfection. If any resident of Winnipeg desires to see a war dance, without the trouble of going to Fort Alexander, we believe he may satisfy his curiosity by simply calling at the land titles office some day when business is dull.

When midnight marked the beginning of a new week, the fun came to an end, and we went to bed. Very soon, however, music of another character greeted our ears. It was no other than "Dundee's wild warbling strain". We got up to investigate. In a triangular space, formed by the fronts of two tents, a group of Indians were seated with books in their hands, singing in their own language. In each of these tents, we learned, a woman lay at death's door. To make the matter sadder still, they were sisters. A lantern hanging in the door of one tent served to show the words to the singers, and to the curious onlookers the

wretched scene within. After looking on for a time, we again retired, and the last sound we heard that night was the tune of the familiar hymn, "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross".

No one visiting Fort Alexander should fail to take at least one day to see the rapids. We did so, and that day was one of the pleasantest we ever spent. With two Indians to paddle, and Asa Gray for company, we embarked after breakfast in a birch canoe for a day up the river. Our first halt was at the Manitou Rapid. Here the Indians brought the canoe alongside the granite shore with their paddles till we stepped out. Then they followed, and taking the canoe each with one hand, while with the other they placed their paddles beneath it, drew it ashore without allowing it to touch the rock. Then they raised it on their shoulders and carried it over to the head of the rapids. At Pine Falls this was repeated, and again at the Bear rapids.

At Pine Falls there used to be an extensive lumbering establishment. A power canal was cut across a point from the head of the fall. On our return we had the pleasure of running down this canal at, we don't know how many miles per second. This canal, a wilderness of charred debris

and the grave of Mr. Adams, one of the proprietors who was killed in the mill, are all that now remains of what must once have been a large and thriving establishment.

Here one begins to get an idea of the immense volume of water going down this river, but any ideas one may form before reaching the Silver Fall must be dwarfed and shattered when that point is reached. One need not go there with the intention of describing the scene, for it beggars description. And he need not take a kodak along: he will be ashamed to show the thing in such a presence. But just to stand and view that mighty force of water raging down, now, in apparent defiance of all law, growing into mountains half way down the slope, then spreading, surging over rocks at one's feet, and dashing into the caldron with its dazzling, never changing silver turmoil—this is an experience worth making an effort for.

We spent some time here, as well as at each portage on the way, botanizing, and had the satisfaction of getting quite a few new specimens. The Indians took quite an interest in this proceeding. One touched with his extended paddle a plant which he said was poison ivy, and was quite an

astonished Indian when we pulled it up and took a bite of the stem. It was a species of aralia.

There are very fine views along the river, and a day on its waters in a birch canoe, is, in our humble opinion, an ideal day. On the morning of the 19th we bade good-bye to Fort Alexander, and the *Loon* began to beat her way down to the river. At the Roman mission we took on board Mr. and Mrs. Mailbot, of Selkirk and their two boys. We dined at Elk Island, and then made off for Grand Marais, which place we reached near sundown, after experiencing rain and wind from every point of the compass. The next day was fine and with a fresh breeze from behind we were soon in the muddy Red, which is as good as saying we are at home.

The Yarn of the Petit Juror

Speaking seriously we were all Grand Jurors—all but the Attorney-General, a retired Judge and perhaps five or six others, members of the Government and functionaries high in the public service. To serve in that capacity we had been selected as is customary, in theory at least, because of our intelligence, uprightness of character and general respectability; and now our duties at the assizes ended we were out for a holiday at the country's expense under the pretext of inspecting public institutions. We were returning cityward, night had fallen, and a snow-storm was raging, in the face of which our comfortable special moved every minute more slowly till at length it came to a stand-still, and we realized that we were snow-bound on the prairie ten miles from town.

That is how this story came to be told, for something had to be done to pass the time, and when every device was exhausted, and a story was called for, the honour of first place was unanimously awarded to him we called the Petit Juror.

Even in our extremely respectable company, the first place was given by tacit consent to him. The Judge, to be sure, who but lately had retired from the bench full of years and honours, might have disputed the palm with him; and wealth, position, judicial ability, and a crown of silver hair, would all have combined to make a strong argument, still first place was given the Petit Juror. He also had filled many offices of trust and responsibility in the service of his country. He conducted perhaps the largest business in his line in America, the branches of which formed a chain across the continent, giving employment to hundreds of people. In the city from which he had for a quarter of a century conducted this vast business not so much as a discreditable suspicion had ever attached to him, and his name was then and doubtless will continue to be regarded as a synonym for integrity and all the virtues. He was of a cheerful disposition and his conversation was bright, and of the sort which, without being pedantic, always throws light on the matter in hand. He was the smallest man in our party, being barely five feet in height, though well and even strongly proportioned. This is how we came to call him the Petit Juror. He commanded our unbounded admiration and respect, and hence we had chosen

him as our foreman, though we insisted it was because he was the smallest man. And when it was suggested that a story would draw our minds from our unpleasant situation, members of the Government and of the bar were passed by and the honour given to the "smallest man".

We had been discussing a case in which we had refused to find a "True Bill" because the crown counsel admitted that the prisoner had committed the theft with which he was charged to relieve the most pressing wants of his family when no other resource could be found. Both the Attorney-General and the Judge maintained that our plain duty was to have sent him to the petit jury for acquittal or conviction as they saw fit in the light of all the evidence. On the other hand our foreman contended that it was our duty, in the first place to shield from the disgrace of a public trial a man who appeared to be perfectly honest and respectable but who under the pressure of misfortune and inexorable necessity had committed what the law called theft, and who, if sent to trial, must undoubtedly have been convicted and given a sentence, which, even though nominal, should brand him forever as an enemy of society; and in the second place to bring the case to the notice of the court in our presentment, in such a manner as

would result in the preventing of the recurrence of similar cases in the future.

At this the old Judge fairly snorted with indignation, denouncing the idea as anarchistic and threatening to the very foundations of society, and characterizing our action as a gross perversion and miscarriage of justice. "These unfortunates", he continued with withering irony in his voice, "are the enemies of society; and if they were dealt with promptly and as they deserve there would be fewer criminals living on the country's bounty."

"And fewer judges," rejoined the Petit Juror, with a gleam in his eye that made me feel it was not intended as a corollary of the other's statement. "As to what constitutes a perversion of the thing commonly called justice, your court-house article," he continued, "I don't claim to be qualified to speak on the point, this being absolutely the first time I have had the honour of rubbing noses with it; but I challenge you to deny acquaintance with any case wherein miscarriage of that same justice has not proved most gratifying to yourself, judge though you be."

There was such gladiatorial malignity in the whole bearing of the Petit Juror as he said this that we all, I am sure, felt as though we were pulling him off his venerable antagonist, so to

speak, when we assailed him with a most pressing demand for a story. And it was evident he felt as we did, for he replied, "No thanks, gentlemen. Let the Judge tell a story, and I'll supply the theme: A Gratifying Miscarriage of Justice."

But the Judge would have none of it, and our demand not abating, at length the Petit Juror yielded and began:

“Well, since the Judge will not accept my theme I suppose I must try and work it out myself. Any one with a turn for story-telling could do so I dare say, for there is no lack of material. But as this is my first attempt of the kind you must grant me the privilege of making myself the hero and speaking in the first person; It will render my task less difficult. Besides you must not look for a nicely-balanced and rounded story. I will spin you such a yarn as I can in the circumstances, and as it has pleased you to start it, so you may snip it off whenever you feel you have had enough.”

The scene will be a town of say ten thousand inhabitants, and I an only child of a wealthy and prosperous business man.

I was motherless, and divided my childish affections between my father and an uncle, his brother, who was a frequent visitor, and who, owing to the fact that most of his time was

devoted to politics and speculation, was noted for never being able to remain in business, or to retain a position for any considerable time. He had been educated as a lawyer, but had tried his hand at almost every business of a speculative nature, and always with the same result. When yet a child of ten I came to know pretty well what bankruptcy was by hearing my father and uncle discuss the frequent failures of the latter. And these discussions forced the impression on me that my uncle's failures were anything but honourable, indeed my father stated it in plain words at the collapse of an insurance scheme that had been hatched in my uncle's fertile brain. But my uncle took his lecture without a word, and then asked for assistance till he could start in business again.

This my father refused, but offered him a position as manager in a large drygoods store, of which he was owner. At first my uncle declined this offer, but accepted it after some weeks of impotent endeavor to get another start on his own account. In this position he evidently proved satisfactory, for within a year my father made him partner.

About this time my father met with an accident, which, a year later resulted in his death. During his illness, my uncle had the control of all the

business of the firm, and of my father's private affairs as well. At this time his family, consisting of himself, his wife and three daughters, came to live with us, and after my father's death they continued to occupy the house.

I was of course too young to inquire into my position regarding my father's property. That I had always lived in an elegant and richly-furnished home, one of the finest in the town, and that nothing I required or wished for was refused me was about all the practical knowledge I had of my father's wealth; though I did have an impression, a hazy one naturally, that it was something vast. I may say that all my recollections of that period were hazy till later thought and investigations brought them out clear and definite. I do remember clearly, however, the consternation and furore when less than one year from my father's death, the business which had passed into my uncle's name, went into insolvency. The excitement was intense. Creditors went wild, and charges of fraud were preferred against my uncle. Lawsuits became the order of the day, but from them all he escaped. Men were calling him liar and villain on every hand, yet nothing incriminating could be proved against him. He made it appear that all the wealth my father was

supposed to have owned had never in reality existed, and that the business was virtually insolvent when he took hold of it, and that the money that he had put into it, and for which and his services, my father had given him over all his real estate, including our home, was what kept ~~it~~ moving since that time. No one believed him—people cursed him for a swindler, but either because his story was true, or because of his early legal training, he weathered the storm.

Although my uncle continued as kind and affectionate towards me as he had been before my father's death, I began to dislike him. This dislike gradually grew on me till it became an uncontrollable aversion, and I could not bring myself to stay in the same room with him. So far as provision for my education and general well-being went, I was treated exactly as were his own children, and in matters of bon-bons and such toys as boys delight in, I was even more favoured than they. These facts, set one against another, filled my life with misery, and I soon began to entertain the idea of running away. Just then there was a circus in town, and I showed a remarkable aptness in imitating the feats of the performers. The manager happened to see my performance, and praised me and assured me that I was born to be a

circus-performer and nothing else. This gave direction to my half-formed scheme, and the circus became at once the rock of my salvation. But one day while I was at school it moved on to the next town. The one place on the grounds where I was sure of escaping my uncle's notice was at the deep pool, under the shadows of the maples, where the river curved in behind the house. He never went there. So to be out of my uncle's sight, the following Sunday, I spent mostly in that spot. I took my bathing-suit along, but I never put it on, and when I returned to the house I forgot it there.

I shall never forget the feelings with which I entered the house that night. It was the hour when the whole household were usually at evening service, but as I reached the front door, the feeling that my uncle was within overcame me and I fled around by the back and climbed as noiselessly as I could up a stair which led from the kitchen to the servants' quarters in the third story. My room was on the second floor, and to reach it I had to follow a narrow hall-way across the house to where another stair led downward. To reach the head of this stair I had to enter the upper room in a square tower-like projection at one side of the house, a sort of lumber-room lighted by three

extremely narrow windows set in one casement on its outward side. The door which opened on the end of the passage I was following was somewhat cracked and rickety, and as I approached, I could hear voices. I approached more noiselessly and almost before I was aware of it, I had my ear to the crack in the door and was listening to a rough snarling voice—

"Why not sink the pup? Easiest thing in the world. Watch 'im swimmin' under the trees. Jump in to save 'im—see? Grab 'im—call for help— go under with 'im. Bring 'im ashore—too late! No risk. Get a medal for it. C'rageous attempt to rescue a drowndin' kid! No blood—no scare after. But what's my price? Why a snug thousand, with five hundred down, and balance on delivery."

"Good God! One thousand!" It was my uncle's voice, low and husky.

"Yes it's worth the half of that to get a man what can make a plan—a man 'with brains."

"No, Kit. I can't pay more than five hundred. Do the job in the way you propose and I'll write the check as a reward for your bravery."

"Ha! You see the value of my plan, you do! It's worth the five hundred I guess. No, sir! One thousand or do the job yourself, and have me

as a witness agin' you at the trial—" I could hear my uncle gasp, but the other continued, "Or maybe you'll let the brat grow up, and squeeze the old merchant's dollars and send you a beggin' as you ought to be. Or p'rhaps you'll let 'im pay me for my sarvices. Now thin am off, so quick!"

"Well, come when it's done and I'll pay your price."

"Count me out the five hundred now, or the deal is off, pal! An' you can have the check ready to-morrow, if the day is fine, and the kid goes swimmin'."

I heard crisp bills fingered in silence, and then my uncle added in a tone I never heard before "There, go."

I crept into one of the servants' rooms and hid. I judged that "Kit" would go out by the way I had entered, and so he did. My uncle accompanied him along the hall, returned and entered the room they had just left, locked the door and descended by the other stair.

I crouched in my hiding-place till darkness fell. Then to get away from the very neighbourhood was the thing to do.

As soon as it became quite dark I slipped down and out by the back way and hid myself in the gloom of the maple grove. This brought me

to the place where I usually bathed, and there on the rustic bench still lay my forgotten bathing suit. Under the shadow of the great trees the water lay black as pitch, but beyond it wore a steely glitter, cold and deadly. Then the tragedy I had heard outlined seemed to be enacted before my eyes, I saw myself bathing where the trees hung over, I saw the rough man spring in and bear me under, and I saw him carry me up the shore limp and dead. The horrible mental scene brought me to my senses. I must away! The sight of my forgotten bathing-suit decided my plan. I would put it on, and leave my clothes there. Then perhaps my worthy uncle would think the wish of his heart was granted."

At this point in the story, the moving of the train drew our attention away from the narrator, and I noticed the Judge who sat beside me was as white as paper, and that he gazed with a stony glare at the Petit Juror. I asked him if he was ill and he recovered himself with a start, and added, "Just a spasm". He then asked if I could get him some brandy. I poured him a glass which he just tasted, saying, "It's past". Then leaning back into the corner of the seat, closing his eyes, asked me to wake him when we neared the city. By this time the Petit Juror was continuing his story.

"I hurried away under the cover of darkness, and walked till I overtook the circus. The manager was somewhat doubtful about keeping me, but I was so determined to stay, and assured him I was alone in the world, without any one to care what became of me, and I was so eager to learn the tricks of the circus despite a pair of sore and blistered feet, that no doubt he concluded he would be losing a business chance if he refused me, so with the circus I remained. We soon crossed the international boundary and for eight years I did not set foot on Canadian soil; nor in all those years did I meet one person whom I had known before.

I loved athletics, any form of physical exercise was a pleasure to me, so it was not long till I was a first-class trapeze performer, fancy rider, and generally proficient all-round circus man.

But the circumstances that militated towards making a circus performer of me had also set my thinking apparatus going, and furnished material for many a night's cogitation. And thus everything connected with my history and my uncle's that had not entirely escaped my memory was recalled, reviewed in the light of all the other circumstances, and finally allotted a place in a chain so well-connected that to my mind, at least, it constituted what legal gentlemen call a "reasonable

theory"; which theory was that my father's wealth had been plundered wholesale by my uncle—my would-be murderer, and perhaps my father's. As years passed, the more I thought about it, the greater was my desire to visit my home and see for myself how things had been shaping themselves.

From the very first I was a prime favourite with the manager, and he gave me every chance to become expert in almost every line, and in learning every detail of the business, and for some time he had made me his assistant manager, and usually consulted me not only as to the circus itself, but also as to the route of travel. And now I advocated a Canadian tour, and the manager being rather ill and out of sorts, left everything to me. So it came about that one fine evening we opened with a grand performance in the town from which I had fled under cover of darkness, eight years before.

Although acting as manager, I was too fond of performing not to take part in the trapeze work. I was swinging by my feet from a rod held in the hands of the lowest of the three other similarly-situated performers, preparatory to taking a header across the tent, in which feat the others were to follow me, when I was startled in seeing below

me the upturned face of my uncle. Near him sat three young ladies—the children with whom I used to play. For the very briefest instant I forgot the performance, and so succeeded in throwing my motions out of harmony with those of my colleagues, thus making the accomplishment of our intended feat dangerous if not impossible. So calling to the others to climb, I swung away, catching a rope in my flight, and reached the ground in safety. That was my first and only failure in my circus career. I did not perform again that night. I went to the manager and told him I was ill and must be relieved. He agreed, so I dressed and went forth into the city.

The first place I paused in my walk was at the very spot where I had left my clothes so long ago. The grove of maples still overlooked the river behind the tall old-fashioned house. All the house that I could see was in shadow save the outward face of the tower. On it the light of the sinking moon fell. Beside this projection I noticed an object not formerly there. A telegraph line was being built through the town and the men had quit work after planting a tall pole beside the house directly in front of the tower. It had not been made firm but simply placed in the hole and left leaning over towards the house with its single

cross-tree pointing downward to the casement of that room in which I had heard my death planned. As I sat there my eyes wandered up that post and along that raking cross-tree to that window, a thousand times if once. Then a light appeared in the window, and it seemed like hours that it held my attention.

When the light disappeared the post was no longer visible, for the sky was black with clouds. No light was to be seen anywhere. I rose to return to my lodging, but that sloping post with its emphatically pointing cross-tree, made such an imprint on my mind that my steps, instead of leading homeward, had brought me to its foot. It pointed directly to the centre window, and I instantly remembered that this very window used to be drawn inward at the bottom for purposes of ventilation. At that moment, I am free to state, not the slightest burglarious intention possessed my mind; but the same instant I found myself minus my shoes, and climbing swiftly upward.

When I reached the cross-tree I found it did not reach within three feet of the window, and that it was about the same distance above the sill. In my pocket I found a coil of tent-cord. One end of this I fastened to the post, and keeping a twist

of it about my arm, I worked my way towards the window. Sliding myself along the cross-tree face downwards, I worked gradually backwards till only my breast rested on it. Lower and lower my feet dropped, and I shoved myself once more till only my chin and hands rested on the tree—and both feet rested on the window-sill. Grasping the cross-tree with both hands, and bracing myself with one foot, with the other I shoved against the sash. It swung inward below. Everything happened just as I expected; it seemed as if I was simply working out a well-laid plan. Then carefully I gave a push which eventually landed me within the room.

My first act was to listen; but the only sound I heard was that of the clock striking two. I crossed to the door with the cracked panel, but it was no longer there, it had been plastered over. I sought the one that opened on the stair, but it was locked from the outside. In moving about I came against a large cushioned office chair, where I seated myself and fell to wondering what I had come for, anyway. What if I were detected? That were easily answered: 'I—the rightful owner—would be sent to jail for burglary. As my thoughts were busy, my hand resting on the seat beside me touched something cold,—a bunch of

keys! Mechanically I fell to trying first one and then another in the lock of the desk which stood before me. At length one fitted, and drawing forth the till I saw before me a sheet of paper on which I thought I recognized my father's handwriting. No one who ever saw a page of that writing could ever fail to recognize another, even in such gloom as was about me. When my father wrote he covered the whole page—a big heavy hand as easy to read as print, but which left scarcely any of the page blank. Without another thought I lit the lamps and began to read—my father's will! It was duly signed and executed, and bore a date which was shortly before my uncle came to live with us. One whole page was occupied with an inventory of the property and moneys left to me. I folded it and placed it in my pocket. Then I glanced at another document which lay unfinished on the desk. It was my uncle's will. It enumerated almost the same properties as did the other, indeed it was very nearly a copy of my father's as far as it went; but everything was devised to my dear wife or to my dear daughter so-and-so. The money mentioned in this will, and which corresponded very nearly with the sums mentioned in the other

it stated to be in a box in a certain drawer "in the back of the desk in my private study".

I turned the desk noiselessly away from the wall and after some searching succeeded in locating the drawer in question. A row of large nail heads gave me the hint. I could see no use for them so began to finger them. Finding one loose, I tried pressing on it, but getting no results, I put the point of my knife under it and drew it out. It left a square hole into which fitted a key from the bunch I had found. A turn released the drawer, and in it lay a tin case the weight of which convinced me that not only did it contain the money mentioned, but contained it in gold. Inspection confirmed this; the box contained gold in coins of every denomination, as well as a quantity of jewelry which had no doubt belonged to my mother.

So this was where my father's wealth had vanished? What should I do? Turn loose the hounds of the law and hunt this cursed scoundrel to the earth? I was then not quite twenty, but I had then, as yet, some very pronounced opinions regarding law and litigation; that it required men of means to wrest satisfaction from them; that the wronged was as likely to suffer at their hands

as was the wronger. I remembered how my uncle had weathered a perfect storm of litigation respecting this very wealth eight years before. I knew him to be a schemer, and did not doubt but that he had himself hedged about with a thousand safeguards. No, it was quite out of the question to take proceedings against him in my present circumstances. Perhaps at some future time I might when I had matters arranged more to my satisfaction, when I should have found "Kit" and enlisted him on the side of justice, but at present I was unequal to the task.



I locked the desk and restored it to its former position, then with a piece of my tent cord I slung the box of gold over my shoulder, and with my father's will and my uncle's keys in my pocket, began to work my way out. This was even more difficult than getting in, but I succeeded. I made my way back to my room, and hid my spoils down in the bottom of my trunk.

We stayed in the town a full week, and so far as I knew, nothing was said about the burglary. My uncle had good reasons I could well understand for not making his loss public, but it was not till we had again crossed "the line" that I felt quite at ease over the matter. I invested my "swag" to the best advantage, and fifteen years after, when

I revisited that town, it was with wealth enough to make the tardiest justice move.

I established myself in business there, and for years I tried to discover "Kit" and ferret out the facts of my uncle's connection with my father's business and estate. I succeeded in both years ago; but at that I stopped. And at this I must stop now, for here we are at the station."

Even while the last sentence was being spoken there began throughout the car a commotion like that of a school at dismissal, and I believe that I alone saw the hunted-to-death look of fear and misery on the ghastly face of the Judge as he glared at the face of the Petit Juror. I helped him out and saw him to a 'cab in silence which I felt oppressive and awkward but which I could not break; for though I had known him long as an honoured member of society and an ornament to the bench, I could not forget a former residence of his, that I as a contractor had demolished not so long ago; and it was the old house—square tower, narrow windows, closed-up door and all—described by the Petit Juror.

Among the Wood Camps

“O YES, it is cold in Manitoba, but then you don't feel it.” So says everybody here except an occasional “tenderfoot”. And how true it is! Though our weather is cold in winter, it is constant, and the atmosphere is so dry that cold is but little felt. Children will play out in the streets without overcoats or mufflers, when the thermometer registers 25 and 30 degrees below zero, and the weather calm. But just let the air move, a Nor'wester blow, or the north end of the South wind with its razor edge electrify your anatomy when the temperature is in the thirties or forties and you do not need to be invited to seek shelter.

From the meteorological register at Portage (kindly shown to us by the observer in charge) we form a good estimate of the dryness and constant regularity of our climate. Here we find that from November 16th, 1892, to May 7th, 1893, the temperature never rose above freezing, at which latter date there was a slight thaw; and from November 16th, 1892, until April 17th, 1893,

they had good sleighing on the country roads—every day of the whole five months fit for teaming.

Right good use, too, do teamsters and farmers make of such conditions. After the grain is all marketed attention is turned to the wood supply for the coming year. From 200 to 250 loads of wood come into Portage every day,—much for the use of the town, much more to be stored away in wood yards for future use, and by far the greater portion going out on the plains, many farmers hauling wood twenty-five miles. Along with each quarter section most farmers have a "wood lot" of twenty acres in the timber belt south of the river, and those not thus blessed purchase wood from the government, paying twenty-five cents a load of one and a half cords of green wood, and getting all the dead and fallen timber free.

This wood is always cheap in Portage, being a successful rival of the far-famed Estevan coal which has proved such a boon to other places, as Winnipeg and Brandon where wood is scarce and dear. Once when visiting the latter place, we were much amused to see on the market some six-foot Sioux Indians with their loads of wood for sale to the unsuspecting citizens. Each drove a diminutive "shagannappy", which drew a large sized

"hand sleigh" with less than a quarter of a cord of switches not one over an inch and a half thick at the butt. The most respectable one was used for a persuader.

"How much for your load?"

"Tree dollar, boy."

Three dollars! I would not give "two dollar, boy" for pony, rig and load, with the Sioux thrown in to boot.

Many of the farmers build winter houses in the bush and thence convey all their stock and feed, chickens, ducks, pigs, geese, cattle, horses and children, and spend a happy winter, free from every "blizzard" which sweeps the open plains so mercilessly. Many a merry surprise party takes a drive, and spends a pleasant evening with friends "in the bush", laughter and song and the merry jingle of bells making the woods ring again.

As "all roads lead to Rome" so all wood roads lead to Portage, and striking out east, west, and south are leading arteries of traffic which naturally spread into numberless branches each ending by some woodpile or lot. It is easy to get astray going out, but impossible coming back.

On Thursday, March 9th, after a two days' thaw, we concluded "it is now or never" to visit the wood camps. So piling the family into the

"carryall" we take the Western trail early, so as to avoid meeting the returning loads, for how shall we "turn out", since the snow is as yet about three feet deep. But leaving the well beaten "avenue" we find a double track all the way.

At the "Old Fort" we take the river road and find that the wise woodman has taken the northern side, using the high wood banks as a "snow break". Ever and anon a road switches off to the left, crosses the river and climbs the southern bank, then it spreads out fan-shaped and loses itself. After testing some of their mazy windings, we return and keep the river road for some five or six miles, meeting I know not how many loads—some of cordwood, some of poles, some of logs—dry or green, and yet some more of oak for fence posts.

Many pretty scenes present themselves as we trace the windings of the river: towering hills and sloping beaches, little fairy willow-covered islands, and overhanging cliffs. In many places the river has washed away and undermined the banks and the broken perpendicular face shows the stratification of the river silt at former high levels. Here is one place where the bank is thus some twenty feet high showing stratification all the way down. About ten feet above the present



level, large trees, about a foot thick, had grown; then the river had filled up—sand, clay, and muck for about another ten, and the trees still stood and then, when the filling stopped, they threw out roots at the surface and grew on, nearly doubling their diameter. Now the soil has washed and fallen away and left these curious trunks standing exposed on the face of the embankment with two sets of roots. One set at the surface supporting the living trunk, then extending downwards some eight or ten feet; a smaller dead trunk with the original roots decaying as they protruded from the perpendicular face of the embankment.

Eventually crossing over we climb the southern bank and here we find another "trick of the trade". The road up the steep bank was covered with strawy litter, as also were the others we noticed, for they come down loaded and go up empty. It makes a sure footing and an excellent brake. Following the windings of the road among the hills we soon find our friend's "camp" nicely sheltered on the river side by a timbered knoll. Here our host with his wife and two bright little boys "kept house" for themselves, and as many choppers as could pack into their shanty—14x14 inside. His comfortable stable and serving yard were filled with horses, colts, cattle, pigs, ducks,

guinea fowl, and a fine lot of well-bred chickens. On the roof was rolled up the skin of a black-tailed deer, in the yard lay the foot of an immense elk. Peace, plenty and prosperity seemed to reign.

Following the sleighs a mile or two farther in, a busy scene presents itself. Axes going on every hand. Here stands a team switched off the main track, blanketed, and eating their oats; their owner is just over yon knoll preparing his load. Up yonder road a few rods is a large Sioux "tipper", and its owner, with a fine team of horses, unlike his Brandon cousin, is just starting off to Portage with a full load.

In any direction you see horses and men, and hear the merry whack, whack of the axe, mingled with snatches of song and the merry jingle of bells.

You ask why they let their teams stand till they cut and build their loads and then start home in their wet snowy clothes. Simply this: all parties do not seem to have the same ideas as to *meum* and *teum*. Here they are getting their wood off government land, and it is every man for himself. If you left part of a load out, the next man that came along might help himself and you would have far better satisfaction swearing at your own folly than trying to swear to your own wood after finding it in somebody else's woodpile

maybe twenty-five miles away. Not one nor two make it a practice to go to the bush at night and "pick up" a load. If they do not find some "tenderfoot's" pile they usually can gather enough along the road where someone has upset and was compelled to leave a quarter of a cord or so; or someone has hauled two small loads out to the rise, and has a little too much for one load to town.

So, too, will they steal from the Government and think it smart. To save the timber on their own lots, or being too lazy to break a road, they help themselves off Government land. Going home they meet the Inspector:

"Where did you get that wood?"

"Off my own lot", is the premeditated reply.

But never a stick does he get on his own lot. So the world wags.

